

SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY
What Happens to Each When We Die?
Includes Chapters, Questions, and Answers on Heaven and Hell

DEDICATION
Jan, Aaliyah, and Mayah

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SOME QUESTIONS THIS BOOK ANSWERS

Is there extra-biblical evidence that God exist?

Is there life after death?

Is everyone going to die?

What are human beings made of?

What is the spirit, soul, and body?

What happens to spirit, soul, and body when we die?

Are Near Death Experiences in the Bible?

What is the resurrection and how many are there?

Is grieving helpful or harmful?

Will everyone go to heaven?

What is heaven like?

Is hell a real place, if so, who will go there?

INTRODUCTION

From the time I was a young boy I always wondered what happened to human beings when they died. I grew up in a Christian family, went to Sunday school and church and was taught that good people went to heaven when they died, while those that were bad went to hell. This was partially satisfactory to my curiosity for a while but as I grew older my curiosity grew and these answers were not sufficient. How could someone go to heaven or hell if they were dead? At funerals I saw bodies lying there in the casket unable to move so how could they possibly go to heaven, hell, or anywhere else? If they did go to heaven, are they alive? Do they know what is going on? Do they come back to life? What is heaven like and what is hell? What are these places like and what do people do there? Will I see my loved ones again or are they gone away forever? These and related questions stuck with me throughout my teenage and young adult years, and I wondered if anyone had the answers. If so, where would I find them?

While I got some tenuous, opinionated type answers to some of these questions, none were sufficient so I concluded that death, heaven, and hell was something that no one really knew much about. As I grew older, I stopped going to church altogether and decided that all of this is perhaps just some sort of myth and that when you die that's just it. After years of college and being exposed to atheists, agnostics, and other secular teachings and worldviews, I was further convinced that all of this was just nonsense. I had not become an atheist, but I could certainly be described as agnostic. There were no solid answers to the questions I had, and I found no evidence whatsoever for the answers that I did receive. Was there a God after all? Was there an afterlife, a heaven, a hell? Is the saying, "when you're dead, you're done" true?

In the early 1980s I was drawn back into the church (see Chapter 1 for more information how this happened) and for the first time began a serious reading of the Bible. There was one particular area that I was still especially concerned about and that was this thing called death. After all, this was an area that I had many unanswered questions about for all my life. But at this stage of my life I learned that there were biblical scholars and theologians who had studied and written much on this subject, and I began reading and studying their works. I was drawn to an area of study in theology called Christian Apologetics, a discipline that taught how to defend the Christian faith. I was drawn to Christian Apologetics and was determined to learn everything that was available to me. I took apologetic courses, read, studied, attended conferences in person and virtually. Along with these studies I was introduced to Systematic Theology and began reading and studying books in this area along with apologetics. It was here where I learned the make-up of human beings, what parts make up human beings, how God put man together. I continued my studies and research to see what each of these parts are and what are their functions. Then I learned what happens to each of these parts when a person died.

I learned what heaven is and what hell is about and at last my curiosity was satisfied. I saw my studies in the area being of great benefits to others as I compiled PowerPoint slides and began teaching Bible study classes on this subject. But I derived even greater joy when, as an Associate Pastor, I gave eulogies at funerals and incorporated an explanation as to what happened to the deceased. I have never failed to see the comfort on the faces of the loved ones of the deceased after delivering such a eulogy. I therefore thought that writing a book on this subject would be a benefit to all who would read it – Christians, non-Christians, atheists, agnostics, critics, and skeptics.

In Chapter 1 I explained that the theistic God of the Bible exists and how we can know He exists even without using the Bible. This is important if we are to understand that there is a life after death and what happens to our spirits, souls, and bodies when we die. If there is no God, there is no life after death, and what happens after we die is irrelevant. Chapter 2 explains the three components of man; spirit, soul, and body; their functions, and how they interrelate. In Chapter 3, I explain what happens to the spirit, soul, and body when human beings die. In Chapter 4, I explain how the resurrections in the Bible can be broken down into a total of seven, and what happens to the spirit, soul, and body during the resurrection. Chapter 5 goes into the grieving process we all face at one time or another, explains the five stages of grief a person experiences, and provides information on the pros and cons of grieving. In Chapter 6 and 7, I explain the nature of heaven, the destination of those who are saved; and the nature of hell, the destination of those who are unsaved. You will also find a very helpful section in the Appendices as they offer a variety of questions and answers on heaven and hell that Christians and non-Christians alike frequently asks. All Scriptures used in this book are from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise specified.

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CHAPTER 1 – Does God Exist in the First Place?

If God does not exist, the discussion of death, life after death, heaven and hell, spirit, soul, body; and related topics have little or no significance, at least not in an eternal sense. So it would be helpful if we can establish up front that God does exist. To do this we need to see if there is any evidence for the existence of God, examine that evidence, and make a valid conclusion. We will begin by looking at some of the biblical evidence for God. However, since some readers may not believe or trust the Bible as reliable, we will also look at four extrabiblical lines of evidence for the existence of God.

Biblical Evidence for the Existence of God

The evidence from the Bible that God exist is overwhelming. It begins right in the first verse and chapter of the Bible and continues throughout the remaining Scriptures.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

Heavens and earth mentioned here includes everything that makes up the universe. Everything that makes up the universe can be put in four categories: matter, energy, space, and time. Furthermore, everything that exists in the universe comes from one of these sources, so God created everything. This verse further states that God created it all “in the beginning” meaning that there was nothing else in existence when He created. This tells us that God existed before anyone or anything else.

As we continue in the Scriptures, we see that Jesus, the Son of God also exists.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 14).

Therefore, Jesus the Son of God also exists as shown in the Scriptures. Now we know that two persons of the Godhead, Father and Son existed “in the beginning.”

But there was also a third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. We know the Holy Spirit is a person because He is referred to as such in the Bible. During the beginning of the church age, believers who had resources would sell their extra land and bring the money to the apostles to distribute to those in need (Acts 4:34-35). Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, were wealthy members of the church and they sold a part of their property. However, they secretly withheld a part of the profit for themselves and lied about it and Peter called them out on this:

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your

own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:3-4).

Notice that Peter said Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and in doing so, he was lying to God. Now we know that the Holy Spirit is also God. Still, the Bible tells us that there is but one God (Deut. 6:4, 1 Tim. 2:5, Isa. 44:6). Yet the Father is God (John 6:27; Rom. 1:7, Gal 1:1). The Son is God (John 1:1; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:8); and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). In theology, we refer to this relationship as the Trinity or Tri-une God. Furthermore, we know that all three in the Godhead are persons. To be a person one must have a mind, emotions, and will. The Bible shows that the Father has a mind (Matt. 6:32). The Father has emotions (Gen. 6:6). And the Father has will (Matt. 6:9-10). It further shows that the Son has a mind (John 2:25). The Son has emotions (John 11:35). And the Son has will (John 6:38). The Bible also shows that the Holy Spirit has a mind (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit has emotions (Ephes. 4:30). And the Holy Spirit has will (1 Cor. 12:11). We can very easily conclude then, that there is one God that exists in three eternally distinct persons. I will not go into a detailed discussion of the Trinity here because the point I’m trying to make is that based on biblical evidence God exists. Furthermore, this same God, who is omniscient stated that He knows of no other god that exists (Isa. 44:6-8).

There is no argument that the Bible shows that God exists. But what about those who don’t believe the Bible? What about those who do not give much creditability to the Bible? What about the critics, skeptics, atheists, and agnostics? For those individuals we can provide extra biblical evidence for the existence of God as well.

Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God

It is generally believed among Christians and non-Christians alike that science contradicts the Bible. However, this is about as far away from the truth that one can get. On the contrary, valid science confirms and reaffirms the Bible. It is impossible for science to contradict the Bible since God is the creator of them both; and God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). When there appears to be a discrepancy between science and the scriptures, it is not because science and the Bible disagree with each other. Rather it is because scientists do not reach the proper conclusion from their use of the scientific method, and/or theologians make the wrong interpretation of the Scriptures.

One argument that provides evidence for the existence of God has been demonstrated in the beginning of the universe. Scientists refer to this as the Big Bang. The Big Bang basically states that the universe, i.e., matter, energy, space, and time, exploded into existence all at once and at the same time. For centuries men have believed that the universe always existed. They believed that the universe was static and eternal. In 1916, German Physicist Albert Einstein developed his now famous theory on General Relativity. This formula showed that the universe did not always exist but had a beginning. Since that time scientists have at least five lines of evidence for this. These include (1) Second Law of Thermodynamics (2) Expanding Universe (3) Radiation (4) Galaxy seeds, and (5) Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity.¹ Virtually all cosmologists agree with the fact that the universe had a beginning.

¹ Norman L. Geisler, Frank Turek, I Don’t Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist; Crossway Books, 76-83.

When we apply the science of logic and reasoning to this scenario, we can formulate an argument as follows:

- Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
- The universe began to exist.
- Therefore, the universe has a cause.

If the first and second premise is true, then the conclusion (i.e. the universe has a cause) necessarily follows. The first premise, commonly called the Law of Causality, has been proven to be true by science and philosophy. Historically, there have been many efforts to refute this fact, but none have been successful. Furthermore, using common sense and reason we know this is true by simply thinking of any object or effect (pencil, hat, chair, Bible, etc.) and know that someone brought it into existence. If the universe (or any other effect exists, it either created itself or someone brought it into existence. Creating itself is out of the question because it would have to exist before it existed, which violates the law of noncontradiction. Even so, the evidence stated above proves the universe has a beginning. The law of causality is a universal law that has no known exceptions.

The second premise was proven by science at the beginning of the twentieth century and was called the Big Bang because scientists discovered that the universe (matter, energy, space, and time) came into existence out of nothing. However, Einstein's General Theory of Relativity showed that the universe was not static at all but dynamic, meaning it would expand or contract.

Other scientists began working Einstein's equations and discovered that the universe was indeed expanding. In 1929, Astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that there are other galaxies beyond our galaxy, the Milky Way Galaxy and those other galaxies were moving away from our galaxy. Furthermore, the farther these galaxies were from the Milky Way Galaxy, the faster they expanded. This carried great implication for the beginning of the universe because if you reverse the trend from expansion to contracting, you will inevitably come back to a point where there was a beginning. Because the first and second premise have been found to be true, the conclusion logically follows, namely that the universe had a beginning. Since the universe had a beginning, based on the Law of Causality, someone or something must have caused it to begin. We know it is "someone" rather than a "something" because a decision had to be made to move from a state of nothing to something, and things don't make decisions. Only "persons" with minds make decisions.

We can learn much about this person that caused this effect, by studying the creation itself. First, this Person who brought the universe into existence had to have always existed because this Person brought everything else into existence. In other words, there was nothing in existence then suddenly, there was something in existence. The fact that something exists today means that someone had to have always existed. Think of it this way: If there was a time when absolutely nothing existed, no God, no universe, no matter, energy, space, or time – if there was such a time when nothing at all existed, what would we have today? Right, absolutely nothing because you can't get something from nothing. There are those who try to cast doubt on the Law of Causality by positing quantum physics or what is sometimes referred to as Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. This principle is essential that we cannot simultaneously predict the location and speed of subatomic particles, like electrons. The atheist and skeptics assert that if causality at the subatomic level is unnecessary then maybe causality at the entire universe isn't

necessary either. However, this assertion carries no weight because it confuses causality and predictability. The Heisenberg Uncertainty principle does not prove that the movement of electrons is uncaused; it only describes our inability to predict their location and speed at any given time. Just because we can't predict something does not mean that it doesn't have a cause. So much for the quantum physics argument. I once had an atheist bring this up to me in one of our discussions. When I explained to him that this argument does not disprove the Law of Causality and why, he very abruptly changed the subject.

So we know that the one bringing this universe had to have been a person because a decision was made to move from nothing to something. This Person is frequently referred to as the Uncaused Cause or First Cause. In addition, based on the characteristics found in the universe, this person had to have been:

- Spaceless, because this Person created space.
- Timeless because this Person created time.
- Immaterial because this Person created matter.
- Powerful because this Person created out of nothing.

We get all of this from science itself. And when we read the Bible, we see that God is the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1); God has unlimited power (Rom. 1:20); God is outside of time and space (Col. 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 1:20). The Bible also shows that the universe is expanding (Isa. 40:22, Jer. 10:12; Jer. 51:15).

What we see then is that science proves that the universe had a beginning, someone powerful, personal, immaterial, spaceless, and timeless had to have created it; and the Bible describes that person as God. This is but one example of science confirming what the Bible says.

One objection that you may come across in your discussions with some Christians is that the Bible can't teach about the big bang because Moses and the ancients didn't know anything about big bang cosmology, it is a modern concept. Therefore, we shouldn't use this analogy to say that scientists and the Bible agree.

We can get a better understanding of why Moses and the ancients did not need knowledge about Big Bang Cosmology or modern scientific concepts when we understand that the same God we're proving that exists, inspired all that is written in the Bible. While there are approximately forty writers of the Holy Bible, there is only one Author, God. The writers of the Scripture were inspired by God in all that they wrote (2 Tim. 3:16). In other words, God told each writer of the Scriptures what they should write. What we're looking for is truth and we can verify this from biblical evidence and scientific evidence. To see that God inspired Moses to write what he did, we can review the scientific evidence and determine if it substantiates what Moses wrote.

For example, in Genesis Moses wrote that in the beginning God created the heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1). Moses was saying here that the universe has a beginning. As shown above, from modern science, we know this to be a fact. We also know for a fact that Moses couldn't possibly have known this on his own since he didn't "know anything about big bang cosmology." Moses had to have had divine revelation to write what he did.

We can see these same type results with other writers of the Scriptures. (1) Isaiah wrote that the Creator of the universe, “created the heavens and stretched them out.” Edwin Hubble and other scientists have proven that the earth is expanding. (2) Job wrote that God, “Stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing.” (Job 26:7). Modern science has provided evidence that the earth is hanging in orbit in space. (3) The writer of Hebrews said that foundations of the earth and heavens will “perish” and “grow old like a garment”, and that God will “fold them up” (Heb. 1:10-12). Modern science has demonstrated that the universe is running out of usable energy (e.g. Second Law of Thermodynamics).

These are just three of many other similar examples that can be given to verify that writers of the Scriptures were inspired by God and did not need knowledge about what they were writing. When the prophet Daniel was told what to write, he said he “heard but did not understand.” He asked, “My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?” and was told “Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed and sealed till the time of the end (Dan. 12:8-9). This is a prophecy for the future, but it illustrates that the writers of the Bible did not always know or understood what they were writing.

God reveals Himself through Specific Revelation (the Bible) and General Revelation (Creation). There are no contradictions between these two because God is the Creator of both; and is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Science does not contradict the Bible but confirms it. Therefore, after reading the Bible where certain scientific events and prophecies are mentioned, one can go to the creation (science) and confirm what the Bible says. This is what we did when we read what Moses wrote about creation and what we saw with the other examples mentioned above.

Objective Moral Evidence for The Existence of God

We can also point to other extrabiblical evidence for the existence of God. One that Christian Philosophers and Apologists have used for years involved objective morality which stems from moral laws in the universe. This moral law for the existence of God is based on the premise that if objective moral laws exist there must be someone who gave those laws since laws cannot create themselves. The argument in syllogistic form goes like this:

1. Every law has a law giver.
2. There is a Moral Law.
3. Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver.

Again, if the first and second premises are true, then the conclusion necessarily follows: Of course, every law has a lawgiver. There can be no legislation unless there’s a Legislature. Furthermore, if there are moral obligations, there must be someone to be obligated to. In the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson called this moral law “nature’s law” and that it is “self-evident.” In other words, everyone knows that it is wrong to steal someone’s personal property, to rape someone, to murder someone to abuse or assault someone, etc. This is precisely why rapists, murderers, abusers and other perpetrators operate at night or when no one is around to observe or otherwise identify them. Knowing that these actions are wrong is universal and does not have to be taught. We know it instinctively and we know it by our reactions.

For example, sometimes we will hear someone denying objective morality as universal. When you ask them if it is wrong for the man to steal the food out of the store, even though he

was hungry, they will say, “It wasn’t wrong since he was hungry.” But if that same thief stole food from their home or personal possessions, they would admit that it is wrong. The Moral Law is the basis of human rights and is undeniable. So since premise one and two are true, there is a Moral Law Giver. We didn’t use the Bible to reach this conclusion but when we study the Bible, we see that it refers to this Moral Law Giver as “God”.

Design Evidence for the Existence of God

Still, another line of evidence we can use for the existence of God without pointing to the Bible is the argument from intelligent design. Intelligent design is the belief that life and the universe could not have arisen by chance but was designed and created by an intelligent entity. In other words, life itself is specifically designed to make it possible and the universe is specifically designed to sustain life.

There is an abundance of evidence that the universe as well as the human body is specifically designed. For example, consider these well-known designs discovered in the universe.

1. Earth is 93M from the Sun – If the earth was any closer, we would burn up. If it were any further away, we would freeze.
2. Expanding Universe – If the universe had expanded at a rate one millionth more slowly than it did, expansion would’ve stopped, and the universe would have collapsed on itself before any stars had formed. If it had expanded any faster, no galaxies would have formed. If there were no galaxies, there would be no stars, no stars, no planets, no planets, no earth. We wouldn’t have a place to live.
3. Oxygen – On earth, oxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. That is the precise amount that makes life on earth possible. If oxygen were 25%, fires would erupt spontaneously; if it were 15 percent, human beings would suffocate.
4. Earth is tilted at 23 Degree Angle – If the tilt were altered just slightly, it would cause surface temperatures to be too hot or too cold for life on earth.

Cosmologists refer to these as anthropic constants and modern science has discovered more than 200 of these. Furthermore, more of these are being discovered every year.

We briefly mentioned that the universe is expanding, but the expansion rate of the universe is also critical to making life possible. The expansion rate of the universe is critically dependent on its mass density. Based on the law of gravity the closer two massive bodies are to each other, the stronger the attraction of those two bodies. This means that the closer bits and pieces of mass are to each other, the greater effect they will have on slowing down the expansion of the universe. On the other hand, the farther apart bits and pieces of mass are from each other the less impact they will have on slowing down the expansion rate of the universe. If the universe doesn’t have additional cosmic density factors like dark energy, the universe with less mass density would not be capable of forming stars like the sun and planets. The rate of expansion would be so fast that gravity would not have time to pull together gas and dust to make stars like the sun and planets. Conversely, if the cosmic mass density were greater, gravity would pull gas and dust together so effectively that stars formed would be greater than the sun. The intensity of such star’s radiation and rapid changes in temperature, radiation, and luminosity, in addition to radiation and gravitational disturbances caused by close supergiant stars, would be unsuitable for life. These are just two life-essential features precisely fined-

tuned in our universe: (1) The exact amounts and diversity of elements and (2) the exact expansion rates of the universe throughout cosmic history. The vastness of the universe is necessary to make this possible.²

When we speak of intelligent design in the universe, some skeptics point to the size of the universe and claim that the vastness of the universe is an "awful waste of space." Why, they say, would a Creator put all that space out there for no real purpose.

Simply put, all the space in the universe is not a "waste of space" but is absolutely necessary for human life to exist on earth. First, life-sustaining elements must have sufficient time to be produced. Density of protons and neutrons in the universe relates to cosmic mass and determines how much hydrogen fuses into heavier elements. Hydrogen is the lightest of the elements and fuses into heavier elements during the first few minutes of creation. The amount of heavy element production that occurs later is determined by the number of heavier elements produced earlier. The density of protons and neutrons must be sufficient to convert about 1 percent of the universe's mass into stars. If the density of the protons and neutrons are lower the cosmos would not be capable of generating heavier elements like carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus, sodium, and potassium. These elements, of course, are necessary for life. If the density of the protons and neutrons were just slightly higher, sufficient to convert more than 1 percent of the universe's mass into stars, we would have too much nuclear fusion. All the hydrogen in the universe would fuse into elements as heavy as or even heavier than iron, and life-essential elements including hydrogen, would not exist.³

These are examples of the designs in the universe, but we also see that life itself has evidence of intelligent design. For example, consider the cell in a human being. Cells are the basic building blocks of all living things, but the human body is composed of trillions of cells and make millions of new cells every second. Each cell contains deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). This DNA contains a volume of information that staggers the mind. A single human cell has enough capacity to store the Encyclopedia Britannica – all 30 volumes- three or four times over, and there are more than 30 trillion cells in the human body. This DNA is like a blueprint that tells everything that the human being would become, from body structure, height, hand side, color of hair and eyes, and everything else about the person. Clearly, this shows design rather than something that just arbitrarily popped up.

Evidence From Personal Experience for the Existence of God (Jesus Christ)

There is nothing like personal experience to verify and substantiate any belief system. This is why eyewitness testimony carries so much weight in court cases. Jesus came to earth as the Son of God 2000 years ago. He revealed human beings to God the Father, taught 12 disciples, explained the sinful nature of man, died on the cross, was buried, resurrected, and ascended to the Father. All of this was to give man the opportunity to accept His atoning sacrifice and be reconciled to the Father.

The disciples at first did not believe Jesus was the Son of God and were skeptical until they saw Him fulfill His prediction of being resurrected from the grave after three days and three

² Hugh Ross, *Why the universe is the Way it is.....*

³ *Ibid.*

nights. After they saw the resurrected Jesus everything change within them. They willingly and eagerly taught the gospel which spread throughout the world. Even more importantly, they gave their lives for the fact that they saw Jesus after His resurrection. Some argue that giving their lives is nothing new or unique. After all, many Muslims give their lives for Allah or Muhammad. This is true because they believe Islam to be the only true religion. A man may give his life for what he knows to be true or believes to be true. However, a man will not give his life for what he knows to be a lie. If these apostles knew Jesus was lying, and all they had to do was admit this to save their lives, you can be sure they would have done it. Even if one apostle gave his life for what he knew to be a lie, it would be a rare occurrence indeed. But in this case, *all* of the original apostles gave their lives rather than denying that they saw the risen Jesus. This is what is called eyewitness testimony and is about as strong as evidence for the resurrection of Jesus as one could receive.

Since that time, some 2000 years ago, millions of Christians have died for the name of Jesus. Billions have been converted to Christianity because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus after His ascension. Today, testimonies regarding a variety of personal experiences have been heard from millions of Christians worldwide, and Christianity is the largest religion in the world. This is because God exist, sent His Son Jesus to reveal Himself to man, start His church and draw to Him all that would believe. The reward is eternal life with God in the Kingdom of Heaven with eternal pleasures (Psalms 16:11). The consequence of not receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior is spending eternity away from God with everlasting punishment in a place the Bible calls hell (Luke 16:23-26; Rev. 20:11-15). This is true even though God wants everyone to be in heaven with Him (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4).

My personal experience with God is real and profound and would be so even if there were no other evidence. I grew up in a Christian home but in my teens, I stop going to church because I didn't see any empirical evidence for God's existence. I didn't see how church and Christianity would fit into my plans and desires for life. After all, I'm a teenager now and my plans and desires were different. By the time I completed high school and four years of college, and listening to secular teachers and professors, I was even more convinced that God did not exist (Incidentally, if you really want doubt cast on your faith, just enroll in a secular college or university). In graduate school I had professors that were atheists, agnostics, critics, and/or skeptics and after listening to professional men and women for four more years and two master's degrees, I now *knew* there was no God. This was true even though my course of study was in business economics, accounting, and taxes, which had absolutely nothing to do with religion or philosophy. These professors and lecturers were experts at working their secular worldviews and ideologies into their teaching regardless of the subject matter. I didn't challenge any of them at the time because I was leaning towards their dogma and principles all along. I was eager to get their views and support on the non-existence of a Creator God, and needed just a little more convincing, and college was where I got it. I felt that life for me was to get myself in a position where I could make as much money as possible, get a fine large home, perhaps a beach house somewhere, luxury cars, travel the world, etc. I was educated, getting off into my career, and making plans to make a lot of money, and live the good and easy life of the American well-to-do. God and church certainly didn't fit into my plans at this stage in my life.

It was here that my personal experience with God comes in. As a Revenue Agent working in the Foreign Operations Division of the Internal Revenue Service, I was assigned to audit tax cases with representatives in many of the main cities throughout the United States. In the early 1980s while working on a few cases in Los Angeles, California I took a tour of Hollywood where I viewed the mansions of many movie stars. It was here that I had the greatest disappointment I had experienced in my life. While I was excited to take this tour, anticipating the sense of awe I would sense while witnessing the residences of the rich and famous, I found myself not being impressed in the least with these luxury homes. I felt a tremendous sense of disappointment in my soul – something anticlimactic was taking place within me. Here I was looking at these splendid, fine, luxurious homes and properties, yet they failed to impress me. In fact, I was rather discouraged, and I thought to myself, “Do you mean to tell me that this is what life is all about? Is this all there is? If I became wealthy, would this be the best that I can do? There has to be more to life than this!” This disappointment led me on a serious search as to what life was really all about. I thought I had better take another look at the Bible and Christianity again. I began reading the Bible and watching Christian programming on television, and eventually began attending church. I began counseling with a pastor of a church in Manhattan, New York and told him what I had experienced. He explained to me that my Hollywood tour disappointment was resulting from God drawing me back into the church. He told me that God was showing me that what I was yearning for all those years during and after college, would not fill the emptiness in my heart or give me satisfaction in my soul. By this time, the disappointment and emptiness I felt in my life was now gone because I was beginning to feel a purpose for life. I began understanding the origin, meaning, morality, and destiny of life. I wanted to learn more about God, and I still wanted to see if there was any extra-biblical evidence for God’s existence. As I continued reading and studying the scriptures, attending church worship services and Bible studies, I learned that there is a discipline in theology called Christian Apologetics, which teaches how to defend the Christian faith. Christian Apologetics is designed to provide not only biblical, but scientific, philosophical, logical and historic evidence for the Christian faith - precisely what I had been looking for. I immediately had an intense desire to pursue these studies and learn everything that I could from them. In taking several courses in apologetics, I learned that there is more evidence for God’s existence than any other being in the universe. As I continued to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I became ever so grateful to God for drawing me away from the materialistic, worldly desires that I thought would bring joy in life. I’ve learned why I was created in the first place, and that true success is not how much education we have, how famous we become, how big our bank accounts or investment portfolios are, how many mansions we own or how many luxury cars we drive (Luke 12:15). True success is to learn the purpose for which we were created and to fulfill that purpose. This definition for success is the one that I developed and still use in my personal life and in all of my teachings even today.

CHAPTER 2 – Nature of the Spirit, Soul, and Body

Human beings were created by God to have a relationship with Him – to know God and make Him known. He created us and placed us on this earth, confined in time and space so that He can

carry out the plan He has to develop us. So when He created us He had to design us in such a way that we could have a relationship with Him and relationships with each other. At the same time, He had to provide us with a body so that we could act and react with each other, traverse time and space, and relate to the world around us – our environment. All of this was done so that human beings could develop a relationship with God, grow in grace and knowledge, build spiritual character so that we can live with Him for all eternity or be separated from Him in darkness for all eternity, depending on what choice we make in terms of accepting His Son Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. In order to accomplish this God made human beings with three component parts or segments – He created us with a Spirit, a Soul, and a Body.

Composition of Man

Spirit, soul, and body, we read these in the Bible regularly, and we use these terms frequently in our conversations. We learn from the Scriptures that when God created us, He created us with three parts – spirit, soul, and body. The Apostle Paul confirmed this in one of his letters that he wrote to the Thessalonians.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).

Paul said here that we are to let the God of peace sanctify us completely. What does he mean by “completely?” He tells us in the second part of the statement. May your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said your *whole* spirit, soul, and body, and this is what is meant by completely. We know then that a man is made of spirit, soul, and body. That is all; there is nothing else. That is the whole person. You are composed of spirit, soul and body. I am composed of spirit, soul, and body and every human being that was created was made with these three parts, spirit, soul, and body – these are the three component parts of man – nothing else.

Also, we know that three is God’s number of completion and perfection. So it follows that He would make a complete human being with three parts. It is also true that the number 7 and 12 are numbers of perfection for God but for different categories. Three is the number of God’s divine perfection, 7 is the number of God’s earthly perfection, and 12 is the number of God’s heavenly perfection. God made us with three parts as part of His plan to bring us into perfect unity and harmony with Him.

This does bring up other questions, however. If the spirit, soul, and body are all there is to man, what about the heart, mind, and emotions that we often hear and talk about? Aren’t they a part of us? Where do they fit in with the spirit, soul, and body analogy? Yes, heart, mind, and emotions are certainly a part of us but all of these come under the categories of spirit and soul. The Bible uses several different names for the spirit, soul, and body. For the spirit and soul, the Bible sometime uses Heart – Prov. 23:7; Mind – Mark 12:30; and Inward Man – 2 Cor. 4:16. When the Bible speaks of the heart or mind or inward man, it is talking about the spirit and soul.

The Bible also uses different terminology for the body. It uses Flesh – Luke 24:39; Earthen Vessel – 2 Cor. 4:7; Earthly Tent – 2 Cor. 5:1; Outward Man – 2 Cor. 4:16 – When the Bible uses these terms it is talking about the human body so keeping this in mind as we read these Scriptures will help to avoid confusion.⁴

What is the Spirit?

So just what is the spirit and what is it designed to do? We know that all human beings have a spirit. In the book of Job, we read that "...there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding." (Job 32:8). Since this spirit is in every human being, we know that this is not the Holy Spirit. This is a spirit separate and distinct from the Holy Spirit. Most theologians call it a human spirit because it is in every human being. This human spirit is how God relates to us through the power of His Holy Spirit. It is how He connects with us. When we repent of our sins, accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, and received the Holy Spirit, He connects with our human spirit. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" Paul tells us (Rom. 8:16).

Also, as Job said, there is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty gives Him understanding – gives the man understanding through the spirit in him. This spirit is immaterial, not made of matter. God obviously gave this spirit to Adam when He gave Adam the breath of life (Gen. 2:7). We believe this to be true because since creating man, the Bible records no additions to his being other than the Holy Spirit at conversion. We cannot see, touch, taste, or smell the spirit. Some scientists have been trying to find out why the human brain is so much more intelligent than an elephant's brain for example, when the elephant's brains is so much larger (11 lbs. as compared to 3 lbs.). This has baffled many and they could never find the cause because they have ruled out anything spiritual and just looked at the physical. So they continue to live in darkness about this. The human brain is so much more intelligent than the elephant or any other creature because "there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding." This is never said about any other of God's creatures.

What is the Soul?

The second part of a human being is called the Soul. The word "soul" is used in different ways in the Bible so we must be careful as we read. Sometimes, soul means a spiritual dimension and sometimes it is used to refer to the body or physical dimension. Sometimes the word soul is even used to refer to a dead body (Lev. 19:28; 21:1). We must carefully consider the context each time to see the proper application. In Genesis it says that when Rachel died, her soul departed from her body (Gen. 35:18). Here the soul is referred to as a spiritual dimension. Sometimes the word soul refers to a physical dimension or whole body. In Ezekiel, we read that the soul that sins shall surely die (Eze. 18:20). Here the soul is referring to a body or the person. We sometimes use the word soul like this in our everyday conversation. We sometimes hear someone say, "you poor soul" or "there were 2,240 souls on the Titanic." In these and similar

⁴ Norman Geisler, Systematic Theology, Volume 4, 46-49.

type statements, we are talking about the individuals, the physical dimension, not the spiritual dimension.

Because some Christians do not understand this, they teach that the soul can die and they refer to Ezekiel 18:20. But, again, we must always consider the context (and use a concordance) to determine how the word is being used. Ezekiel 18:20 is using the word soul in a completely different context, referring to the human body. In this sense, the “soul” (body) does die. However, we cannot dismiss the Scriptures that show that used in a different context, the soul does not die but leaves the body and goes back to God upon death of a believer (see Chapter 3).

For example, in Revelation we read the following:

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held (Rev. 6:9).

John is describing the vision he saw after being taken up into heaven before the seven-year Tribulation on earth. Some of the saints were martyred during the Tribulation and their souls had left their bodies and were now in heaven under the altar. These souls were not referring to the bodies but the immaterial soul in man. So the soul does not die, neither does the spirit. In fact the word soul basically means life.

Sometimes, the words soul and spirit are used together to show them as separate entities such as in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and sometimes they are used as if they were the same. But the soul is the self-conscious part of our being, of our existence. It is our personhood. It is the seat of our will and emotions, our choices, and decisions. It has to do with our minds and personalities. The reason people have different personalities is that they have different souls. If you are a Christian all Christians have the same Holy Spirit, but it's through our souls that we express our distinct personalities. This is why we all can see the same event at the same time but express, explain or describe it in a different manner.

A great biblical example of this is when we look at the four different gospels. The four gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew and John were apostles and eyewitnesses of Christ. Mark was an associate of the apostle Peter and Luke was an associate of the apostle Paul. So they each were first hand witnesses to the life and times of Jesus Christ or close associates of someone who was. Yet, when they wrote their gospels, they all explained the life of Jesus in different ways. They each had the same Holy Spirit that moved them along as they wrote but God allowed them to use their different souls or personalities. This does not mean that there are errors or conflicts in what they said because there are none. But these Apostles just explained them based on their souls or personalities.

There was a reason God did this. God allowed them to use their different souls or personalities so that the gospels could be more easily understood by people of different backgrounds and cultures. But the soul is that part of our makeup that is our emotions, feelings, and will. I like to say that the soul is actually us, i.e., each of us as a person, without the body. It

is what makes us happy, sad, cry, laugh, get angry, see beauty, be creative, build things, drive a car, enjoy a game, etc. I like to say we are a soul, with a spirit, living inside a body. The soul is immaterial, comes directly from God, and as with the spirit, was given to Adam when God gave him the breath of life.

There is another bit of information about the spirit and soul that is very interesting. When God created man, i.e., gave us a spirit and soul, He gave us a need to have a relationship with Him. Many Christians will tell you that before they accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they felt that something was missing in their lives. They felt that there was an emptiness that nothing could fill. Well, this emptiness is real and was deliberately designed by God. God gave us a spirit and soul that would leave us feeling empty until we established a relationship with Him. This is what King Solomon was getting at when he said God has set eternity in the hearts of every man (Eccl. 3:11). Heart is another word that the Bible uses for spirit and soul. So when God gave us a spirit and soul, He included in it a need for us to have a relationship with Him.

In that sense we can say that God designed us to be incomplete until we are complete in Him. This is not a make believe, artificial, superfluous type need. This is a real authentic need that can only be filled by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only one that can give human beings the satisfaction that we need. Many people, including me, thought that money, cars, houses, or other material possessions would provide them with complete satisfaction. After striving to obtain those things and eventually acquiring them, they discovered that there was still something clearly missing. They knew that there was still something dreadfully missing within their soul. This is because there is an emptiness in every human being that only God can fill. It is through the spirit and soul that every human being has a need to worship God. When they don't worship God, they find themselves worshipping something or someone else to fulfill that need. This is why every human being on earth worships somebody or something. If they don't know Jesus, who is God, they will worship other gods. Some people worship the sun, the moon, or the earth. Some worship their favorite movie stars or favorite sports players or favorite singers. Some people worship money, cars, houses, sex, and anything else in which they derive a sense of pleasure. Some create idols to worship; but everybody worships someone or something because we have a human spirit and soul within us that was designed to have a relationship with God and if we don't know the true God, we end up worshipping something else.

Origin of the Soul

As shown earlier, we know biblically that all human beings have a soul, which is one of the three component parts of a human being. Some have wondered and asked questions about at what point is the soul created. Was the soul created by God prior to conception? Was the soul created at conception? Was it created at implantation? Was it created at birth?

Traditionally, there are three primary views held by Christians on the origin of the soul. These are (1) the preexistence view (2) the creation view, and (3) the Traducian View. A brief

description of these views would be helpful in our overall understanding of the origin of the soul.⁵

Preexistence View – The preexistence view has two forms, one the platonic (increased) and Christian (created). The uncreated preexistence view came about from Plato who believed that that human beings are eternal He believed that human souls were not created but existed eternally outside of God. This is unbiblical, unscientific, and philosophically unsound for the following reasons:

- (1) As shown above, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that human beings were created, spirit, soul, and body.
- (2) Scientific evidence shows that human life begins at conceptions, and
- (3) It is impossible for finite human beings to be eternal because there can be no infinite number of moments with finite beings. This is because the present moment is the end of all moments before it, and there can be no end of an infinite series of moments.

Created Preexistence View – This view contains many of the foundational beliefs held by Plato. It held that the soul existed before birth but that instead having existed without creation from eternity, it was created by God from eternity. It was believed by some of the early Christians including Origin. During the early part of his life, even Augustine held this view. This was deemed heresy and Augustine eventually reversed his views on this Created Preexistence View.

Creation View – This view holds that God directly creates an individual soul for each person born into the world. Those having his view believe that the body of each new human being is generated through natural processes by the human parents, but the soul is supernaturally created by God. Various theologians have different views as to the moment this direct creation takes place, including (1) creation at conception (2) creation at implantation (3) creation after implantation (4) creation at animation, and (4) creation at birth.⁶

Traducian View – This view holds that each new human being is a branch of his or her parents. The soul and body are generated by the mother and father. This view rejects the creation view (God creates each new life directly in the womb) for three main reasons:

1. Creation was completed on the sixth day (Gen. 2:2) and God rested from that time and has done no further creation (Heb. 4:4).
2. Scientific evidence shows that the human life (soul) comes from the sperm and ovum of the parents and is first conceived in the womb as a fully individual person.
3. The creationist view does not explain the inheritance of original sin. A holy, righteous, perfect God would certainly not create a fallen soul. Neither can it be accepted that the

⁵ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, 26.

⁶ *Ibid.* 27-31.

contact of a pure soul with a material body in the womb causes its fall. It is more reasonable to believe that both fallen soul and body are generated naturally from the parents.⁷

What is the Body?

The third part of the human being is the body. This is the easiest part for us to know and understand because we all have one. We are all familiar with the body because we can see, hear, touch, and smell bodies. We act and interact with our bodies and the bodies of others, so we have a good understanding of what bodies are all about. Our bodies were made from the earth itself and is the only physical part of human beings. The spirit is immaterial, the soul is immaterial, but the body is material. The body is the outer part of man and the housing for the spirit and soul. In other words, man is spirit and soul inside of a body. The body allows us to interact with the world and each other through our five senses. It is the only part of man that can die (Matt. 10:28, James 2:26).

The body of a believer is the only part that is currently not being redeemed. The spirit and soul are being regenerated right from the time of our conversion, right from the time we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and receive the Holy Spirit. However, the body will be changed at the time of the rapture. In the meantime, the body is still filled of sin (Rom. 7). But since flesh and blood (sinful bodies) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. He will provide us with new bodies raised in glory without sin (1 Cor. 15:50-52). So those are the three parts of human being; spirit, soul, and body.

Some theologians believe we are made of soul, and body rather than spirit, soul, and body. That is instead of a human being composed of a spirit, soul and body, some believe we are made of a spirit or soul, and body. The spirit (or soul) view is called a Dichotomy view while the spirit, soul, and body view is called Trichotomy.

Dichotomist and Trichologist generally believe the same about the body, i.e., the physical body is what connects us with the physical world around us, and the soul is the essence of our being. They believe that the spirit is the part of us that connects us with God. This would explain how the unsaved can be said to be spiritually dead (Ephes. 2:1) at the same time, they are physically alive.

The difference is how these two view the spirit and soul. Dichotomists view the spirit as a part of the soul (or as the soul) that connects with God. The question of dichotomy vs. trichotomy is essentially whether the soul and spirit are different aspects of the immaterial human nature, or if the spirit is simply a part of the soul, with the soul being the whole immaterial part of the human nature.

The Bible makes it clear that we are spirit, soul, and body but determining how they are distinguished and relate to each becomes more difficult. The distinction between the material

⁷ Ibid. 31.

(physical) and immaterial (spiritual) aspects of human nature is pretty clear. It is the distinction between the two immaterial aspects (spirit and soul) of the human nature that is more challenging to determine.

As demonstrated above, both views are supported by Scripture so neither view is heresy. This is not an essential doctrine of the Christian faith (one that is necessary for salvation or prevention of a church being in cult status) so we should not be dogmatic about this. I take the trichologist view in this book because to me the Scriptures seem to point a little more in that direction. Also, I like to look at the three parts of humans separately rather than blending them together since three is one of God's numbers for completion and perfection.

Interrelationship of Spirit, Soul, and Body

Now, how do these three – spirit, soul, and body relate to each other as we go through life? For ease of understanding, we can view these in the following manner: The spirit has a casing around it called the soul and the soul has a casing around it called the body. So we have the spirit encased in a soul and a soul encased in a body, meaning spirit and soul are inside of a body. The spirit expresses itself through the soul and the soul expresses itself through the body. Now, if we refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we see that Paul said spirit, soul and body. The order in which Paul stated this is very important – spirit, soul, and body. We are spirit, soul, and body – not body, soul, and spirit. Many Christians try to reverse the order of these and say body, soul, and spirit but when we view it this way, we are prone to make mistakes in our thinking and action. How? Because if we look at ourselves as our bodies first, we will tend to work toward our sanctification from the wrong direction. We work toward our sanctification from the outside in, rather than the inside out. We try to build spiritual character from the outside in rather than from the inside out.

For example, let's say we visit a website that shows images that we, as followers of Jesus should not be viewing, perhaps pornographic material. We may have gotten there by accident (or deliberately). If you went there by accident, you know you shouldn't be on that website, but your eyes (body) see this image and you decide to check it out further. Next thing you know you are scrolling down the page looking at more and more of these images. Your body, that is your fingers and your eyes, are doing the work but your soul tells your body what to do because your body can't do anything that your soul does not tell it to do. Your soul expresses itself through your body. So you find yourself looking at pornographic images because you are working out your sanctification from the outside in – from the body and soul, rather than the inside out, spirit and soul. If you had worked from the inside out you would have reached down to the spirit the second you got into that website and the Holy Spirit, working through your human spirit already had the appropriate response for you – don't do it – flee that site immediately. And that's what you would've done.

Or let's say you're lost your job and can't pay your bills. You are depressed because you've lost your job and have no money to pay your bills. Your soul is downcast because there aren't many job offers and you've not heard from the many applications that you submitted months

ago. This goes on for some time and you see nothing promising on the horizon. Because your soul is depressed, it expresses itself through your body. How? Your countenance and body language change and anyone can look at you and see that you are having problems. They may not know what the problem is until you tell them, but your facial expression and your body language clearly tells them that something is wrong in your life. This is because your body is doing what your soul is telling it to do. This is true regardless of what is going on in your life, whether you can't pay your bills, whether you are suffering with an illness, whether you are having relationship problems, whether you have problems with your children; if your body is reflecting it, it is because your soul is expressing itself through your body. And your body will show it because your soul is depressed and expressing itself through your body. This is how the soul and body act and interact with each other. This is the way God designed it to be. Well, how do we deal with these situations? How do we get deliverance from these trials and tribulations?

Well, as I said earlier, we are talking about the soul and body but to get the solution to these problems we have to reach down to the third dimension, which is the spirit. In doing this we are now connecting with the Holy Spirit who is bearing witness with our human spirit. We do this by crying out to God in prayer and casting our burdens upon Him to deliver us. When these situations become strongholds or severe trials in our lives, these are spiritual problems and spiritual problems require spiritual solutions. In fact, any problem requires spiritual solutions because when we look for spiritual solutions, we cry out to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is the answer to everything and every problem. We sometimes hear people say no one has the answer to everything. Well, they don't know Jesus. Not only does Jesus have the answer to everything, Jesus *is* the answer to everything. He is the *divine panacea*. But what we are saying here is that we reach down in our spirit, cry out to Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and then we will experience healing, deliverance, anointing, victory, power, joy, and even prosperity. And here is something even better: You can experience all of these blessings even if Jesus doesn't immediately deliver you out of the trial. Jesus can give you such peace in your spirit that you can still be in your trials and be full with joy, victory, and power – the trial will have no kind of victory or power over you because Jesus has given you a spirit of peace and joy. That peace and joy from your spirit will express itself through your soul, your soul will express itself through your body. And everyone will see the joy in your face and body because you will walk around smiling, singing, and dancing as if you're already in the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven!

What I am saying here is that when we find ourselves in these difficult situations, we should not focus on the body because it is the soul that needs fixing, not the body. The body is only doing what the soul tells it to do. If we are angry at someone or can't forgive someone, it is our soul that needs fixing; and in order to fix the soul, we have to release or unleash our spirit by the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit. How do we unleash the spirit? Prayer helps us to do this, but the Bible also tells us getting in the Word and getting the Word in us will help us see where we're falling short. This is what we are told in Hebrews. "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Notice what the writer is saying here; the Word of God pierces through and divides the soul and spirit, opens the soul and releases the spirit.

Now with the Holy Spirit working through our spirit we can get our soul in order. Sometimes we get in the way of the Holy Spirit doing His job in us. This is because we are naturally self-oriented and self-dependent. We want to live for self, please self, satisfy self, look out for self and in some cases glorify self. But this is exactly the part of us that Christ wants us to overcome – self. When we let the Holy Spirit work in us then we act differently, talk differently, and think differently. Most of the time we think too much like humans. You may say, “but aren’t we supposed to think like humans?” Not really because the human nature is a fallen one, and while we are human and naturally think like humans, we are to be working hard to overcome this type thinking and think like Jesus. The Scriptures tell us that we are to “let this *mind* be in you which is also in Christ *Jesus* (Phil 2:5). We are to bring every *thought* captive to the obedience of Christ, (2 Cor. 10:5). God said do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the *renewing of your mind* (Rom. 12:2). So, we are to think like Jesus does but wasn’t Jesus human? Yes, but Jesus was also God and He thinks like the God the Father as they are one God. Furthermore, in His humanity He did not sin (Heb. 4:15). This means He did not sin in word, thought or deed. Imagine that, not even *thinking* sinful thoughts. This is the goal we’re trying to reach. With God’s help this is possible. Without God’s help it is not.

So the mind is another name for the soul and we want our souls to be transformed. To do that God has to let us go through various trials. He has to do some breaking and then we will get our soul straight. Paul went through this with his Damascus Road experience and after this Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20). Paul is saying I traded my soul life (self-centered) for my spirit life (God centered). He allowed the Holy Spirit to break his soul and bring forth his spirit life in such a way that it took over and began to dominate his existence. When this happened, Paul became a transformed man.

So then, again we have to let the Holy Spirit do His job with our spirit, our spirit then expresses that accomplishment through our souls, and then we see it in our bodies. How do we see it in our bodies? These are the people who you see with joy in their faces, smiling, fellowshiping, serving, getting along with others or at least not at odds with others. There are many Christians that set an excellent example of this. This is what we mean by being led by the Spirit or being filled with the spirit. Being filled with the spirit begins with surrendering to God. And surrendering to God begins with prayers of surrender. We simply cry out to God in prayer and say, “Lord, I am yours. Whatever you want is what I want. I am only interested in your will, not mine. Just move me out of the way Lord and take full control.” These are prayers of surrender. We want to give ourselves to God and let Him work through us.

CHAPTER 3 – What Happens When We Die?

So now we see that we are made of spirit, soul, and body. We see what each is and does, and we have a better understanding of the interrelationship between spirit, soul, and body. So what happens to each of these when we die? There are three types of death mentioned in the Bible but first let’s see what is meant when the Bible uses the term death.

The Meaning of Death

The word “death” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word, “*Thanatos*” and it essentially means to separate (*maveth* in Old Testament Hebrew). God told Adam that the moment that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam and his wife Eve ate of the tree, meaning they disobeyed God which is a sin. They did die spiritually the moment they sinned. They began to die physically at the same time and eventually did die a physical death. If Adam and Eve did not accept God provision of salvation, they would have eventually died eternally. These three types of death mentioned in the Bible are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Type of Death	Description	Scripture
Physical Death	Separation of the Spirit (soul) from the body	James 2:26).
Spiritual Death	Separation of the Spirit from God	Gen. 2:17)
Eternal Death	Separation of the Spirit and Soul from God for all eternity	Rev. 20:11-15

Figure 3.1

Physical Death

This is the death of the body, and it occurs when the spirit and soul is separated from the body. It is the result of Adam’s sin for himself, as well as all of his natural descendants, with the exception of Jesus Christ.

Death came into the world as a result of Adam’s sin (Gen. 2:16-17, Rom. 5:12). There is no escaping from this death as it is appointed for all human beings to die after Adam’s sin (Heb. 9:27). However, see discussion on the Resurrection in Chapter seven 4.

Spiritual Death

Spiritual death is spiritual separation from God and is also because of Adam’s sin (Gen. 2:17). This death affected not only Adam and Eve but all of their natural descendants, including you and me.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2).

Every person born after Adam and Eve was born in sin because of their sin. However, everyone can be born again by accepting the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son

Jesus to pay the penalty for the sins of every human being and in doing this human being can have eternal life (John 3:3-5).

Eternal Death

Eternal death is separation from God forever (Rev. 20:14-15). This results when Adam and Eve or any one of their descendants refuse to repent of sin and accept the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. It is called the second death in the Book of Revelation.

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15).

The Bible refers to this death as the second death as John did not consider the spiritual death in this statement, only the physical and eternal deaths. Those who are born only once (physically) will die twice (physically and eternally). Those who are born twice (physically and spiritually) will die only once (physically). You will notice that all three of these deaths involve a form of separation. The Book of Life mentioned here refers to those who have repented of their sins, accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, and are born again.

What Happens When We Die?

We all want to live as long as possible and most of us do everything that we can to achieve that goal. But regardless of how much effort we put forth and whether we live for 60 years, 70 years or 100 years, one thing is certain and that is how short life is. We know this from experience but the Bible repeatedly talks about the brevity of life and that our life is only for a short time on this earth. Consider several Bible verses that talk about the little time we have on this earth (emphasis mine in all verses).

“Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and full of trouble.
² He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue Job 14:1-2).

Oh, remember that my life is a breath!
My eye will never again see good. (Job 7:7).

Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,
And my age is as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Selah (Psalm 39:5).

For my days ^lare consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a hearth (Psalm 102:3).

whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away (James 4:14).

This is a fact that we all must deal with, that life is short. We are born, we grow old, we die, and it doesn't take long before this is done. Furthermore, it seems as if the older we get, the faster time flies. But it is designed to be this way by Almighty God who has greater things in store for us than what we're enduring here in this life. But to complicate matters even more, we don't know when we're going to die. Sometimes, if we're suffering from a terminally ill disease, we have a pretty good idea of when we are going to die (even then we don't know the exact day and time). Old Testament patriarch Isaac said, "...Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death." (Gen. 27:2).

King Solomon made a similar statement in the book of Ecclesiastes. He made it clear that we do not know the time and that we are like fish taken in a net or birds caught in a snare.

For man also does not know his time:

Like fish taken in a cruel net,

Like birds caught in a snare,

So the sons of men *are* snared in an evil time,

When it falls suddenly upon them (Eccles. 9:12, emphasis mine).

Some people live to be an old age, but many die young. In fact, it seems as if more and more people are dying at a younger age today than in the past. Growing up in the south my mother used to say, "Be careful. There are just as many short graves out there as long ones" meaning of course that just as many young people are dying as there are old people dying. Whether or not this was statistically true, her point was well taken - Don't think you won't die because you're young, so be careful.

The bottom line is that our lives are completely in God's hands (Psalm 31:15). He knows the day of our birth and the day of our death. In fact, God has determined not only when we will die but where we will live.

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. (Acts 17:25-26, NIV).

God has established when we were born and when we would die in certain periods of history. This does not mean that God has pre-ordained us to die at a certain time but that in God's omniscience, He foreknows precisely when we are going to die; and in His permissive will He allows this death to take place at that time.

Usually in this discussion people ask if you can die before your time. Some say that you cannot die before your time because God has the time set for you to die. Others say you can die

before your time because God has the time set for you to die. The Bible shows that how we live our lives have a lot to do with how long we live our lives. For example, it says that if you honor your mother and father your days will be long on the earth (Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). In the Book of Proverbs, we read that if we fear the Lord, it will add more time to our lives (Prov. 10:27). On the other hand, the Bible tells us that there is a sin that leads to death (1 John 5:16). So how we live our lives certainly has much to do with when we die. But can we die before our time? The answer to this question is what is meant by “before our time.” God does not create us and say, “I want John Doe to die at age 56 on December seventeenth.” “Or I want John Doe to live to be 101 years old before dying September seventh.” Instead, based on God’s foreknowledge (omniscience) He automatically knows the kind of life we will live that will lead to a longer or shorter life span; and He automatically knows when we are going to die. So we can’t die “before our time” from God’s perspective because God knows what time we’re going to die. In other words, God knows what that time is going to be so we can’t die before the time that God already knows. On the other hand, we can die “before our time” when that time is compared to what time we could have lived had we lived by God guidance as set forth in the verses above. The bottom line is that we don’t know what time we’re going to die or how long we could live, so the best thing to do is to follow God’s principles as set forth in the Scriptures and leave the consequences to Him.

So now just what happens when we die? We have established that man is made of spirit, soul, and body and we’ve seen how these three parts functions and interact with each other. But what happens to these three parts when we die? By understanding how we got these parts in the first place, we can better appreciate what happened when we die.

And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7).

When we read the first part of this verse, if we stop at the word “ground” we would see that that was the first action in this process. God formed man from the dust of the ground, period. Right at this point the man was a body with no life in it, a dead body (James 2:26). This is what we would call a corpse today. This is what we see lying in a casket when we go to a funeral – a dead body.

Now we go to the second part of this verse, we read that God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (some translations say “soul” but see Chapter 2 for explanation of soul). Now God placed something into the dead body. He placed into this body, the “breath of life.” Here we can infer that God placed into the body a spirit and soul. As mentioned earlier, we feel safe in making this inference since at no other time in the Scriptures we see God adding anything to the human being after the creation of man (other than the Holy Spirit at conversion). So now we have a complete human being, spirit, soul, and body. This human being goes through life, lives for so many years and then dies. Now what happens to the spirit, soul, and body when this person dies? When God was creating the man, He first formed the body, then inserted into the body a spirit and soul. When the man dies, the reverse takes place. The spirit leaves the body and goes back to God (Eccles 12:7). The soul leaves the body

and goes back to God (Gen. 35:18, Rev. 6:9) and the body goes into the ground from which God made it (Eccles 12:7). For additional explanation on the final destination of the spirit and soul, see Chapters 6 and 7.

This brings up several other questions: When the spirit and soul go back to God, does the deceased person know what is going on? Are they still alive? You bet the deceased person is still alive! Remember the soul is the deceased person and the spirit, also a part of the person, is the medium for communicating with God. These two never die. So the full human being never dies. Only the body dies. Furthermore, when this separation from the body takes place, we are more alive than at any other time since we were first born because we won't have a sinful body as a burden to us. And we will most definitely know what is going on because the Bible shows that there will be at least two angels escorting us right into the presence of God (Luke 16:19-24). These angels will no doubt assist us by answering all our questions and informing us as to what is happening.

When we say that someone has died, what we mean is that their body has died. The soul which is us without our bodies, and the spirit which is the part of us that helps us relate to our Creator do not die. Only the body dies, and that is only temporary because there will be a resurrection where we will all get new incorruptible, imperishable bodies. When Jesus returns at the Second Coming our bodies that were buried in the ground at our death will be raised incorruptible, imperishable, and equipped to last forever (see Chapter 4). We will get into our new bodies and will reign with Christ whose Kingdom will never end. But what happens when we are escorted into heaven? Here we will be judged (Heb. 9:27). This judgment for Christians, however, is not to determine if we are guilty of anything because Jesus has already paid the penalty for our sins. This judgement is to determine what our rewards are going to be in God's Kingdom, and we will be rewarded according to our works since we became Christians (Rev. 22:12). We will also no doubt be trained for the positions we each will have during the 1,000-year millennium reign of Jesus on earth when we return with Him. This judgement for those who aren't Christians, since they are already guilty, is to determine what degree of punishment they will receive in hell. Just as every Christian will not receive the same reward in heaven, every non-Christian will receive different degrees of punishment in hell (Rev. 20:12-13).

The Intermediate State

Some people have erroneously believed that when we die we immediately get our newly resurrected bodies but as we've seen this isn't the case (Eccles. 12:7). The state of our existence between the moment we die (leave our bodies) and receive new resurrected bodies is referred to in theology as the intermediate state. This brings up questions and different views as to the state of the deceased in the intermediate state. Do they exist in a disembodied state in heaven, or do they have a temporary body until they receive the final permanent body at the resurrection? Let's look at both of these views.

Temporary Body View

As the name implies, those holding this view believe that Christians who die receive a temporary body at death. This is largely based on the passages of Scriptures found in 2 Corinthians:

5 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2** For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, **3** if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. **4** For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

These verses are interpreted to mean as our earthly bodies (tents) die we immediately receive new temporary bodies (buildings) in heaven.

Also, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man (non-believer), when the rich man died, he wanted Lazarus to cool his “tongue” with his finger dipped in water. Having a tongue of course, indicates a body (see Luke 16:19-31). Furthermore, in Revelation 6:9-11 martyrs in heaven are shown as wearing white robes, another indication of having bodies. These bodies in each of these situations are seen as temporary bodies until permanent bodies are given at the resurrection.

Disembodied Spirit View

Most other Christians hold to this view believing that after death, we exist without bodies in the intermediate state. In reading the verses in 2 Corinthians above, they state that the body (building) mentioned cannot refer to a temporary body because it is referred to in verse 1 as “eternal in the heavens.” In addition to this, when we look at the context it implies that there will be a period of temporary nakedness until it is clothes with the resurrection body that we will receive in the future (vs 3 and 4).

Whichever view you prefer to take in this situation, it is certain that the separation of soul and spirit from the body is temporary. The day will come when we will be reunited with our permanent glorified, incorruptible bodies and will never again be disembodied. This is the fact that really matters.

Consciously Aware

Are we consciously aware in our intermediate state? Do we know what is going on with us and our surroundings? Do we have the ability to understand what God is doing? Many people, Christians and non-Christians alike believe that when we die, our conscious dies also - all consciousnesses vanishes. This is an improper conclusion. Keep in mind that only the body dies, the soul and spirits are always alive. The Bible demonstrates that all who die are in a state of consciousness during the intermediate state (Luke 16:19-31). Furthermore, as shown in the story of Lazarus and the rich man, we are in complete possession of our memories, including where we came from and our loved ones. In this same story, Jesus made it clear that after death no one

can comfort the nonbelievers and they cannot escape from where they are. There is not a second chance as some denominations teach today. Our life on this earth today is referred to as the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2).

We have explained what happens to a Christian after the cross but what about the intermediate state before Christ's first coming? Christians have two different views on this which we will identify by following what Dr. Ron Rhodes refer to as the Hades View and the Heaven View⁸

Hades View

Those holding to the hades view believe that there are two compartments in hades, one for those who are saved and the other for those who aren't. As shown in Luke 16:26, there is a great gulf that separates the two and one cannot get from one side to the other. The saved side is referred to as "Abraham's bosom" and the other side, the unsaved side is simply referred to as 'torments.'

When Jesus, being the firstfruit, ascended, He led the Old Testament saints from Abraham's bosom to heaven with Him. They believe that Paul referred to this in his letter to the Ephesians.

⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men."⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) (Ephes. 4:8-10).

It is believed by proponents of this view that these verses, specifically verse 8, shows that Jesus led the saved side of hades to heaven for the very first time, when He ascended. Prior to Jesus' first coming, those Old Testament saints that died, were simply waiting in Abraham's bosom for Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

Heaven View

Proponents who hold to this view believe that soul and spirits go immediately to heaven the moment an Old Testament believer dies. For example, Elijah was taken immediately into heaven:

And it came to pass, when the Lord was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal (2 Kings 2:1).

God also took Enoch to be with Him in heaven (Gen 5:24).

Furthermore, King David knew he was going directly to heaven when he wrote,

⁸ Ron Rhodes, *The Wonder of Heaven, A Biblical Tour of our Eternal Home*; 50-51.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever (Psalms 23:6).

When responding to the assertion that Ephesians 4 is referring to Christ taking the Old Testament saints from Abraham's bosom to heaven those holding the heaven view state the following:

- (1) Abraham's bosom is a metaphor for heaven, the place where Abraham went. It is not hades but far away from hades.
- (2) Ephesians 4 said that Christ led "captivity captive." Saints could never be considered as "captives" in Abraham's bosom as we are saved by our own free will. Jesus was not leading friends into heaven but bringing foes into bondage as He conquered the forces of evil.

There are many respected theologians holding each of these opinions. Whichever view you hold will not affect your salvation because this is not one of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

Near-Death Experiences

So where does near-death experiences (NDE) fit in with the spirit, soul, and body analogy? There have been many books written and movies made about people who claimed to have died or experienced NDEs. For example, books like *Heaven is for Real*, *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven*, *Clinically Dead*, *To Heaven and Back*, *My Journey to Heaven* and *Heaven and the Afterlife* are some of the more popular ones. Some of these have become bestsellers with multiple millions of copies sold and kicked off a phenomenon in the religious community as many Christians jumped on the bandwagon. In some of these publications, people claimed to have gone to heaven, seen and conversed with loved ones, friends, family members and others who have died earlier. Some claimed to have even seen and talked with Jesus during their NDE.

Obviously, as Christians we look forward to going to heaven and being with Jesus Christ for all eternity. This is our goal and destination, so books and movies of this nature have certainly aroused a degree of curiosity and excitement among many Christians. The problem that this presents however, is that many Christians form their views, feelings, and opinions about death, heaven, and the afterlife from these sources rather than on the Bible itself. This is not a wise approach to take because only the Bible presents the true accurate picture of death, heaven, and the afterlife.

One incorrect view is that at death only the soul is immortal. It is only the soul that separates from the body, fly away to heaven, and forever be with God in a disembodied existence. In other words, immortality is for the soul alone and not the body. This view was held by various Greek philosophers like Plato and have worked its way into various movies and written publications. This, of course is not what the Bible teaches.

In the Scriptures we learn that immortality is of the soul, but the body will also be resurrected and made immortal. Notice what Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

When Paul speaks of “the first fruits” here he’s talking about Jesus being a representative sample of the harvest that would come. The Jewish worshipers knew what he was saying as they would offer the first fruits of their harvest to God as a sacrifice in the temple. So here Christ is said to be the first fruits of the general resurrection of the dead that will eventually take place. Jesus’ bodily resurrection has already taken place in advance and is a forerunner of our eventual resurrection, so that our resurrection bodies will be modeled and patterned after Christ’s. So in this sense, immortality involves not only the soul but also the body. Paul wrote a similar statement to the Philippians when he said.

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Phil. 3:20-21).

Paul is saying here that our humble, lowly body will be transformed and conformed to the image of Christ’s glorious resurrection body. This would be the very same body that Christ had when He emerged victoriously from the grave, defeating death, and ascending up into heaven. So there is no doubt that our bodies will be eternalized with our souls in heaven.

The question now is when does all of this happen? Do we receive our new resurrected bodies the moment we die? The answer to that is no, we do not receive our new bodies the moment we die. Paul explains to us when we will receive our newly resurrected bodies in his letter to the Thessalonians.

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen ^lasleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus (1 Thess. 4:13-14).

Paul is explaining to the brethren in the church at Thessalonica that he wants them to be aware of what is going to happen concerning those who have died (fallen asleep). He wants them to know that they have hope and have no need to sorrow like those who do not have hope. Our hope of course is Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:1).

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in

the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

Paul goes on to explain that those of us who are living at the time of Christ's return will not be changed and caught up with Him before those who have died (vs. 15). The bodies of those saints who have died are in the graves at this time. Then Jesus will come down from heaven with a loud shout, the voice of an archangel and loud trumpet call. Those bodies in the ground will have been made incorruptible, glorified, and will come up out of the ground to meet Jesus in the clouds. Then those of us who are alive at that time will have our bodies changed in the twinkling of an eye, caught up with Jesus in the air and we will be with Jesus forever (vs. 16-18). Jesus will take us all back to heaven in our new resurrected, glorified, incorruptible bodies, where we will be with Him for all eternity. This doctrine is called the Rapture of the church.

Many Christians and denominations do not believe in or teach the doctrine of the Rapture and instead interpret the verses above as occurring at the Second Coming of Jesus. However, there are distinct differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming. For example:

- In the Rapture, Jesus comes in the air (1 Thess. 4:16-17). In the Second Coming He comes to the earth (Zech. 14:4).
- In the Rapture Jesus comes for His saints (1 Thess. 4:16-17). In the Second Coming He comes with His saints (1 Thess. 3:13, Jude 1:14).
- In the Rapture believers depart the earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17). In the Second Coming unbelievers are taken away (Matt. 24:37-41).
- In the Rapture Jesus claims His bride (1 Thess. 4:16-17). In the Second coming Jesus comes with His bride (1 Thess. 3:13).

It appears that most Christians shrug off and even ridicule the notion of NDEs. This is understandable since these experiences are always sensational and as shown earlier, some claimants of NDEs have even admitted to falsifying their stories. How do we know when and if these stories are real? How do we know that the person making the claim has not been hallucinating? Dreaming? Or even experiencing the effects of various drugs he or she has consumed.?

Whether authentic or not, those of us who have researched this subject have noticed that NDEs have brought a degree of comfort and peace to many of those who have lost loved ones. However, we must be careful to always refer to the Bible in seeking valid answers to these (and all other) issues. Christian Pastor and author, Dr. Robert Jeffress made the following statement on this matter.

“When it comes to near-death experiences we need to think biblically. This involves determining whether an NDE corroborates or contradicts Scripture; whether it glorifies God or self, and whether it motivates the experiencer to know more of God and His Word or to seek additional experiences. Specifically, we

should keep seven principles in mind while evaluating the experiences of those who claim to have already visited heaven.”⁹

Dr. Jeffress stated these principles as:

1. Near-Death Isn't Death.
2. The Bible is sufficient.
3. Adding to or Taking Away from the Bible Is Condemned.
4. Question the Identity of Any “Being of Light”.
5. Beware of the Occult.
6. Jesus' death and Resurrection Should Be Central to Any Revelation from God.
7. The Bible Doesn't Record Near-Death Experiences.¹⁰

In other words, it's important to remember that when a person has a near death experience it is not the same as a person having died. Stated simply, near death is not death. Furthermore, it's appointed for man to die *once* (Heb. 9:27) so no human being can honestly and realistically say that they died and came back to life (other than Jesus). Also, many books on NDEs seem very convincing and pacifying to those who are grieving the loss of a loved one. However, it is important to remember that we should never let these books, or any other take precedent over the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible is more than sufficient to provide us with all the hope and comfort that we need during time of grief. The Apostle Paul gave us words to comfort each other during these times in his letter to the Thessalonians (1Thess. 4:13-18). The Bible is the inerrant, incorruptible, inspired Word of God to humankind and as such, should not be taken lightly, ignored, or disregarded. In fact, God promises condemnation on anyone who adds to the Bible or takes away from the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19).

Many people who have experienced an NDE claim to have seen a “Being of Light” and reported that this Being was Jesus Christ. Some have even stated that Jesus spoke to them and gave them information about sin, heaven, and/or hell. Notice the following claims made by some.

- “Sin isn't a problem.”
- “There is no hell.”
- All people are welcomed into heaven.”
- Every religion is equally true.”¹¹

When we compare these statements with the Bible, we find that they are diametrically opposite of what Jesus taught. Two opposites cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense, so someone is not telling the truth. Since it is impossible for Jesus to lie (Heb. 6:18), and God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33) it is very easy to tell where the

⁹ Robert Jeffress, *A Place Called Heaven*; 65.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 66-74.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 69

untruth lies in these cases. This is not to say that those who have these experiences are deliberately making false claims. They could very easily believe every word that they speak but have been deceived by Satan and his demonic forces (Rev. 12:9).

There are those who assert that the Apostle Paul had a NDE when he was on the road to Damascus, saw a blinding light, and fell off his horse during his conversion experience. The story is told in the book of Acts.

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. ⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” (Acts 9:4-6).

However, there are several differences in what Paul experienced and what NDEs report. Consider the following:

- Paul was very much alive and no way near death at his conversion.
- The light was something unlike a typical NDE because it literally blinded Paul until he later recovered.
- In telling King Agrippa of his experience, Paul never mentioned anything remotely resembling a near death experience.
- Unlike the Jesus of typical near-death experiences, the Jesus Paul encountered commissioned him to evangelize exclusively in His name – to bring people to repentance and to humble themselves un the lordship of Christ. ¹²

It is important to keep in mind that the Bible never records any NDEs even though some claim that it does. Those who make this claim name Lazarus, Jesus, Stephen, Paul, and John. In each of these cases, these assertions have been found to be without merit and debunked. Dr. Jeffress made the following statement on the matter.”

“...let me make one point perfectly clear; in the past God occasionally raised people from the dead (meaning they were actually dead!) to illustrate a spiritual truth. God stopped raising people from the dead sometime during he New Testament era because this miracle was no longer needed to affirm the veracity of the apostles’ message. Once the New Testament was completed, the test of any else-proclaimed messenger from God was his adherence to the Bible, not his ability to raise people from the dead, and that same test applies today.”¹³

¹² Ibid. 73.

¹³ Ibid.74.

I concur with Dr. Jeffress on his argument on this subject of NDEs. It is important however to understand that what you believe about the subject of NDEs has no effect on your salvation one way or another. This is not an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

CHAPTER 4 - Spirit, Soul, and Body in the Resurrection

There is much confusion about the resurrection in the Christian church and some churches don't even teach on the subject. There are several questions that are often asked about the resurrection, with many going unanswered. Why is there a resurrection if Christians are already in heaven? Who is going to be resurrected? Where does the spirit, soul, and body fit into the resurrection process? How many resurrections are there? Will people have a second chance for salvation in the resurrection? I believe answering these questions will be helpful in understanding this subject, especially as to how it applies to the spirit, soul, and body.

During the spring Passover or Easter season we hear a variety of sermons on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We see and hear these on TV, social media platforms and of course in our churches. And in the Christian churches, there is a tremendous amount of emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus. So just what is the resurrection? Resurrection means to be raised from the dead (John 5:28, 29); but the word is used in different ways in the Bible. For example, Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:43) but this is not the type of resurrection we're talking about when referring to Jesus' resurrection. With Lazarus' resurrection, Lazarus eventually died again but with Jesus' resurrection Jesus would never die again. Also, the resurrection of Jesus is a promise that we who die in Christ will never die again when we're resurrected. Up to the present time, Jesus is the only one who has received this type of resurrection and is the only one that has a non-perishable resurrected body. This is why He is called the firstfruit from the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

So just why is the resurrection of Jesus so important? The resurrection of Jesus is foundational evidence of who Jesus claimed to be. It is the linchpin of the Christian faith as without the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no Christian faith. This is the reason why so many skeptics, critics, and atheists put forth such a deliberate effort to delegitimize the resurrection. These people continuously attack the resurrection because if they can disprove the resurrection, they can disprove Christianity. Sadly, it's not just skeptics, critics, and atheists who attack the resurrection. You may be surprised to know that even some Christian churches and denominations teach that the bodily resurrection of Jesus is not a legitimate claim.

However, there is significant evidence to support the biblical resurrection of Jesus and I believe bringing out some of this evidence may be of great use to us in understanding the overall picture of what happens to the spirit, soul, and body when we die.

When Paul was in Ephesus around 55 to 56 AD he wrote to the brethren in the Corinthian church. Notice what he said in his letter regarding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you first of all

that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by ¹Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time (1 Cor. 15:1-8).

Paul made it clear in his letter to the Corinthians that Jesus die for our sins, was buried but was resurrected from the grave. He further stipulated, that Jesus was seen by more than 500 different people, some seeing Him at different times, and then he stated that he saw Jesus himself. In other words, Paul was making it clear that there was eyewitness testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. He further stated that some of those eyewitnesses were still living at the present time, so anyone with doubt of the resurrection could go and question them. Paul goes to explain in verse 12-20 how important belief in the resurrection is for salvation.

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Here we can see how significant the resurrection is to the Christian faith. Paul said if Christ was not raised:

- Our preaching is useless
- Our faith is useless
- The Apostles are false witnesses
- Our faith is vain
- We are still in our sins
- The dead in Christ are lost
- We are the most pitied of all men (1 Cor. 15:14-19).

This is highly significant. We can see how vitally important the resurrection is to the Christian faith. Paul said it is of *first* importance. It is the heart of the gospel; it is a primary condition for our salvation; it is the foundation of the Christian faith; it is the linchpin of the Christian faith; and without the resurrection we would have no Christianity. Without the resurrection Christianity is finished. We may as well pack up and go home, eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die (1 Cor. 15:32). In addition to that, the resurrection of Jesus is a testimony that God is sovereign and has power over death. It is a testimony that you and I will be resurrected – a testimony that all of our bodies will come out of the graves. Paul said how can you say we're not going to be resurrected when we have been preaching to you that Christ was

resurrected? If Christ was resurrected, we are also going to be resurrected. Our spirits and souls departed our bodies when we died (i.e. only our bodies died) and went to be with God while our bodies went into the ground. (Eccles. 12:7, Rev. 6:9). I want to emphasize here that theologians frequently describe Jesus' resurrection as a bodily resurrection. This is because Jesus came out of the grave in the very same body in which He was buried. One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas (doubting Thomas) did not believe it was Jesus he saw after the resurrection. He said that unless he saw the nail holes and put his finger in the hole where the nails went, he would not believe. Jesus said to Thomas "Reach your finger here and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing." (John 20:27). There are some Christian churches and denominations that attempt; to spiritualize the resurrection of Jesus by saying He was resurrected spiritually. This is heresy and false doctrine. The *bodily* resurrection of Jesus is what the Bible teaches.

At the resurrection, only our bodies needed to come up out of the ground. When Jesus comes for His church during the rapture, He will bring with Him those saints who have died (their spirits and souls) and they will get into newly, glorified, resurrected bodies. Those followers of Jesus who are living at the time, will have their bodies instantaneously changed, and we will all be taken back to heaven with Jesus (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

You may think that the resurrection is supported with only biblical evidence but there is also extra-biblical evidence for the resurrection. There are several non-Christian scholars who weighed in on the subject and agreed on certain relevant aspects of the resurrection story. There are at least 12 different facts that these scholars agree to but I will list four since these four are sufficient to convince those who are willing to believe. So just what are these four that we're going to look at? These four agreed upon facts are as follows:

1. Jesus was crucified and buried in a tomb.
2. The Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of women followers.
3. Jesus appeared to more than 500 people after He came out of the grave.
4. The original disciples abandoned their long-held beliefs and gave their lives because they saw Jesus after the resurrection.

First. Jesus was crucified and buried in a tomb.

After his crucifixion, Jesus was buried in a tomb by Joseph of Arimathea. As Christians, we know this from the gospels and we hold fast to this belief. But some critics say Jesus did not die. Some say Jesus just passed out on the cross and was revived later, by the cool air in the tomb. Some say there was a doctor in the tomb that revived Jesus. In 1972, an Australian writer by the name of Donovan Joyce published a document called *The Jesus Scroll*.¹⁴ In this writing Donovan said Jesus didn't really die, he just passed out; and they had placed a doctor in the tomb who was waiting to treat and revive Jesus. This argument is so absurd that no one uses it anymore. In fact, people stopped using this argument shortly after the resurrection – the argument that Jesus never died. First, Roman soldiers made sure Jesus was dead by thrusting a

¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jesus_Scroll

spear in his chest. This spear pierced the pericardium which is the sack around the heart and blood and water came out of Jesus at that point. So, they had to make sure Jesus was dead before they took Him down from the cross. Second, Greek and Roman historians wrote that Jesus died on the cross, and these people were not Christians. So we got external writings outside of the Bible saying that Jesus died from crucifixion on the cross. Third, in the 20th century, medical authorities did research into the crucifixion of Jesus and showed that crucifixion is essentially death by asphyxiation.¹⁵ As the body hangs downward, the intercostal and pectoral muscles surrounding the lungs halt the normal process of breathing. Therefore, even if Jesus had just passed out or would've somehow been in a trance, He would not have been able to survive death by asphyxiation. Why? because you can't live long without breathing or getting oxygen from someone by artificial means. So even if Jesus had only passed out and survived the spear in His side, the modern medical authorities agree that Jesus would've died from asphyxiation. But then there are other common sense points that a reasonable person would consider. For example, let's just say that Jesus had survived and was just faking it until He could be revived by a doctor hidden in the tomb. To get out of the tomb, He would've had to grab the stone that was blocking the entrance to the grave – a stone that took several men to move, roll it back out of the way with nail pierced hands, limp around on feet that had been pierced by nails, walk seven miles to Emmaus where the disciples were hiding, and convince them that he had just conquered death and the grave. This is absurd. So this whole story about Jesus not dying on the cross has been debunked and at least 90% of non-Christian scholars agree that Jesus died by crucifixion.

Second: On the Sunday following the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers.

Again, we have several lines of biblical evidence for the resurrection, but we also have non-biblical evidence for this. The biblical evidence is shown in several ways such as the amount of people that saw Jesus after He was resurrected. Another line of evidence is that after the tomb was found empty, the Chief Jewish Priest did not want anyone to know that Jesus was resurrected so he paid the guards a large sum of money and told them to say that the disciples stole the body (Matt. 28:11-15). If the Jewish Priest told the guards to say that someone stole the body, this means that the body was not in the tomb. This means that the tomb was empty. Also, the first to find the empty tomb were women. If the gospel writers were making this up, they would never have said that the women were the first to find the empty tomb because a woman's testimony was not allowed in court. In this Jewish culture women were generally considered to be substandard and their testimony was considered invalid. Some people say the women went to the wrong tomb. If that were the case this would be easily proven. The critics only had to go to the right tomb and find Jesus' body, but this did not happen. The tomb in which Jesus was buried belonged to one of Jesus' disciples, Joseph of Arimathea. Surely Joseph knew where his own property was located. But external evidence, that is evidence outside of the Bible come in the form of historians who wrote that the tomb was empty, and Jesus' body was never found.

There were Greek historians, Roman historians, and several Jewish historians and writers who testified that the tomb was empty. There have been many people that tried to find Jesus' body

¹⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8545147/>

over the past 2000 years. But the fact that no one has ever found his body, even after exhaustive searches, gives even more credibility to the fact that the place believed to be the tomb of Jesus is empty. Furthermore, at least 90% of secular scholars agree to the fact that the tomb had to be empty. So we now have scholars who are not Christians, some atheists who agree that Jesus was crucified and placed in the tomb and that the Sunday following the crucifixion, the tomb was empty.

Third: Jesus appeared to more than 500 people after He came out of the grave.

When Jesus came out of the grave, He wanted to make certain that everyone knew without a doubt that it was Him. This includes the people in His day as well as all the rest of the world even down to this day. So He stayed on the earth for 40 days after the resurrection and made certain that He was seen by hundreds of people. This was so no one would have any excuse that He was not resurrected. Paul said Jesus appeared to Peter, then all 12 of the disciples, then to more than 500 brethren at the same time, most of them still living at the time Paul wrote this, then He appeared to James, then to all the Apostles; then Paul said He appeared to him. Paul said you don't have to believe me, most of the people are still living so you can go ask them (I Cor. 15. 5-7). These people were giving independent, individual testimony that they saw Jesus. Some claim that they said this because they were all followers of Jesus. Not so. James and Jesus' younger brothers did not even become believers until after they saw Him come out of the grave. It was the appearance of the resurrected Jesus that got them convinced and converted. They didn't say they saw the resurrected Jesus because they were Christians but became Christians because they saw the resurrected Jesus. This is biblical evidence but this was not just written by Paul in the Bible, there is also non-biblical evidence. As shown earlier, there were people living at the time who said yes, we saw Jesus walking around and talking after He was buried.

Some critics make the assertions that when these eyewitnesses say they saw Jesus, they were just hallucinating. There is a problem with this assertion however because hallucinations are individual occurrences. People don't hallucinate as a group. Hallucinations are individual, personal, subjective experiences, like a dream. Two people cannot have the same dream, at the same time and in the same sense. And one person can't induce his dream upon another person. In fact, if you're having a dream, and wake up, you can't even go back and recapture that same dream from where you left off. This is how hallucinations are; they are individual experiences. So Jesus made sure that hundreds of people saw Him at the same time so that they couldn't come up with this hallucination excuse. He appeared to over 500 people at the same time. He appeared to men separately; He appeared to women separately; He appeared to some people in the day; He appeared to some people in the night; He talked with them, ate with them and even let some (like Thomas) touch Him. He did this so there would be no excuse about hallucination, visions and dreams. He wanted it to be clear, and that is just what He did – made it clear. Again, we have outside, non-biblical evidence from historians who wrote that people claimed to have seen Jesus after the resurrection. This was eyewitness testimony. Eyewitness testimony is the best testimony that you can get. All other testimony is circumstantial. People have been sentenced to death with only one eyewitness, yet here we have more than 500 eyewitnesses.

This was enough to convince 90% of non-Christian scholars that Jesus rose from the grave, that the resurrection is true.

Fourth: The original disciples abandoned their long-held sacred beliefs and practices and gave their lives to follow Jesus.

These men did not just say that Jesus rose from the dead. They backed it up with their actions. For thousands of years, it was Jewish customs to perform animal sacrifices, keep the Sabbath, keep the Jewish holy days, and follow the law of Moses. This was all they knew, all they did, and all their ancestors did. Then all of a sudden here comes this young, itinerant preacher from Galilee named Jesus. He taught them for three years, told them that He would be crucified and buried but in three days He would be resurrected from the grave, some of them believed but most did not. That is until they saw Him come out of that grave. And after they saw Jesus come out of that grave, they gave up all those old practices under the law of Moses. They adopted the new teaching of Jesus. They adopted baptism rather than circumcision to show they were following Jesus. They began taking communion as a remembrance of Christ sacrifice for their sins. And yes, they even adopted Sunday as their new day of worship. The disciples themselves began worshipping on Sunday because the resurrection was on a Sunday morning, Jesus appeared to His disciples on Sunday, and later, the Holy Spirit came and started the church on Sunday. We see an example of this in the book of Acts (Acts 20:7).

But not only did they give up those old practices, they gave up their lives. And they died terrible, horrific lives. The Bible only records the Apostle James's death, saying he died by the sword, probably a reference to beheading. But church history shows that some of the disciples were beheaded, crucified, beaten to death, and thrown off roofs. They all gave up their lives when all they had to do to save their lives, was simply deny the resurrection of Jesus and live. But after seeing Christ bodily resurrected from the dead, they were convicted in their hearts and gave up their lives. They would never have given up their lives if they didn't see Christ after the resurrection. Some say but wait a minute. Many people give up their lives for religion. Look at the Muslims who gave up their lives because of the teachings of Muhammad. This is true but it must be considered that a man will give up his life for what *he believes to be true*. However, no man will give up his life for what *he knows to be a lie*. If Jesus said He would be resurrected from the dead after three days and three nights but and failed to do so would anyone honestly believe these men would have given their lives for the Christian faith? No way! They had nothing to gain from taking such an action but everything to lose, namely their lives. And even if one or two of them were foolish enough to give their lives for what they knew to be a lie, all 12 of them certainly wouldn't have done it.

So the majority of non-Christian scholars believe in these four facts; and since they all agree to these four facts, the question becomes what can you conclude from these facts? Think about it. You agree that Jesus died and was buried in a certain tomb, you agree that the tomb was empty on the Sunday morning following the burial, you agree that more than 500 people saw Jesus after the tomb was empty and you agree that the disciples gave up everything including their lives to follow Jesus. Then as a reasonable, rational person you would have to conclude that Jesus is who He said He is, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah. And if Jesus is the

Son of God, this means that everything in the Bible is true because Jesus taught that the Bible is the true Word of God. This means that Jesus is the only way to get to God the Father because Jesus taught that He is the only way to get to the Father (John 14:6). Before they were martyred, His apostles also made it clear in their writings that Jesus is the only way to get to God the Father (heaven) (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).

So you can see why the resurrection is so critical to the Christian faith. Many have tried to disprove the resurrection for thousands of years but everyone has failed and many have been converted while they were trying to disprove the resurrection. There is more evidence for the resurrection of Jesus than any other major event in the history of the world. This is something that God made certain to the world so that no one has an excuse.

But there is something else very important about the resurrection of Jesus. And that is that Jesus' resurrection guaranteed that you and I will be resurrected. But not only that you and I as Christians will be resurrected but that all human beings are going to be resurrected. Let's read this in the gospel of John.

25 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:25-29).

A very powerful statement indeed! Jesus said all who are in the grave are going to hear His Father's voice – all are going to be resurrected – the good and the bad. And Paul said everyone is going to be resurrected but each in his own turn. He said, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. 15:22-23). So everybody is going to be resurrected but there is a certain order in which God designed the resurrections to take place. So how many resurrections are there. In most teaching on this subject, you will hear that there are two resurrections in the Bible, one for the righteous (those who repented and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior or those who walked with God in the Old Testament) and one for the wicked (those who rejected God and/or the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is accurate but I think it is nice to look at a breakdown of *all* the resurrections in the Bible, just for our own enrichment and edification. When we take this approach we see that we can break all the resurrections in the Bible down into seven separate, distinct, resurrections. I will not go into a detailed explanation of all of these resurrections, but I will include sufficient Scripture reference in case you want to do further research.

First Resurrection

The first is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is found in all four of the gospels; (Matthew 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18). Most people have heard of the

resurrection of Jesus, but the other resurrections are not as well known, at least broken down in the manner as they are here.

Second Resurrection

The second resurrection is one that few people know about and is hardly ever mentioned at all. Right after Jesus was resurrected, there were a group of Christians that were also resurrected. It is found in Matthew 27:50-53 so let's read what he wrote..."

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. ⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many (Matt. 27:50-53).

These were saints that were actually resurrected after Jesus was resurrected. This is a resurrection that is almost always overlooked. These two resurrections have already happened but there are five more resurrections in the Bible that are yet future. This brings us to the third resurrection.

Third Resurrection

The third resurrection will occur in connection with the rapture of the church. This is when Jesus comes from heaven, stops in the clouds and calls His followers to be with Him. "

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words (I Thess. 4:16-18).

So this is the third resurrection in the New Testament. This is the next prophetic event to happen to the church. There are no prophecies that must be filled before the rapture of the church occurs.

Fourth Resurrection

The fourth resurrection is the resurrection of the two witnesses in Jerusalem during the Tribulation and is found in the Book of Revelation. They will preach on the streets of Jerusalem for three and one-half years, then they will be killed and lay on the street for three and one-half days, then they will hear a voice that says, "Come Up Here!" and they were immediately resurrected, taken up into the heavens while their enemies looked on (Rev. 11:3-13). The whole world will witness this.

Fifth Resurrection

The fifth resurrection will be at the Second Coming of Christ. At the Second Coming Jesus will return with all the saints and the holy angels - there will be billions of us. When we come down to earth, after Jesus stops the Battle of Armageddon, takes care of Satan, the Antichrist,

and the False Prophet there will be a resurrection of all the Old Testament Saints, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, all the prophets and all the other Old Testament saints. We know about the Old Testaments saints when Job said, For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, That in my flesh I shall see God (Job 19:25-26). Also, Daniel said that after the Tribulation many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel, 12:1-3).

Sixth Resurrection

The sixth resurrection will also take place at the Second Coming and this resurrection will be what prophecy scholars refer to as the Tribulation saints. That is those who were going through the Tribulation, did not accept the mark of the beast, and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior during the Tribulation. They were martyred by the Antichrist for doing so. These people will also be resurrected. This is in Revelation 20:4-6. Note that when these verse say “this is the first resurrection”, this means first in the sense that the tribulation saints will be resurrected before the millennium and before the wicked after the millennium.

Seventh Resurrection

At this point everyone has been resurrected except the wicked from the time of Adam up to the end of the millennium. This resurrection is described as the Great White Throne Judgment, and you will read about this in Revelations 20:11-15. Everyone in this resurrection will spend eternity in hell. The judgment is not to see if they should go to heaven or hell but to see which level of hell each person will go. Everyone will not receive the same degree of punishment in hell (Matt. 10:15; Rev. 20:12).

So we've seen that there are seven resurrections in the Bible. Sometimes you will see some prophecy scholars say there are four resurrections. This is because they group the tribulation saints and the Old Testament resurrections together. Or they may say there are two resurrections, the righteous and the wicked. Then some overlook the resurrection after Jesus' crucifixion in Matt 27 or they may ignore the resurrection of the 2 witnesses in Rev. 11. They may not see it as a resurrection. So I am not saying that that they are wrong; it just depends on how they count the resurrections. But I wanted to give you a complete view so that you can have a more in-depth understanding. Of course one can group them as They'd like. The point is everyone will be resurrected, good, and bad, some to everlasting life and some to judgment. All of this is to the glory of God.

So the resurrection of Jesus is highly significant for the reasons we mentioned in this writing. And because it is the foundation of the Christian faith critics usually attack this doctrine to disprove Christianity. But the evidence for the resurrection is so compelling that even most non-Christian scholars are convinced that the resurrection took place. The resurrection is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith, which means we must believe it in order to be saved, and the Christian church must believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus to avoid cult status. In other words, the bodily resurrection is one of the essential doctrines of the Christian faith (Rom. 10:9-10).

CHAPTER 5 – Five Main Stages of Grief

The five stages of grief, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance were developed by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (July 8, 1926 – August 24, 2004). Dr. Ross had a distinguished career as a psychiatrist, spending considerable time studying, teaching, and writing about death and dying. These stages of grief have since been taught and used by professionals for decades and have been very helpful in bringing people to an understanding of the grieving process.

Grief, denial, anger, bargaining, and depression are all emotions found in the Bible, though not always in the context of having lost a loved one. There are examples of various servants of God's experiencing each of these emotions in different situations, and this lets us know that they are not new. More importantly it lets us know that it is God Himself who created us with these emotions or the ability to experience these emotions, and this means that there is some good in these stages of grief. Reviewing some of these biblical experiences will help to demonstrate that these emotions are used in good and bad ways. Seeing these biblical examples may help us in our overall understanding of the grief process.

The first stage, denial has both good and bad connotations in the Bible. Jesus said that we are to deny ourselves to follow Him. He said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me...(Matt. 16:24). Obviously, this is a good example of denial because this denial leads us to have eternal life (John 6:68). God had to give us the ability to deny for us to deny ourselves to follow Him. However, there are also examples of bad denial. Peter denied Jesus, not once but three times. This was such a terrible denial on Peter's part that afterward, he was remorseful to the extent that he went out and wept bitterly (Luke 22:54-62).

God also gave us the ability to be angry and we see many examples of anger in the Bible. All anger is not necessarily bad, as there is good and bad anger. Good anger is referred to in theology as righteous indignation. Moses displayed righteous indignation when he was angry with Israel for worshipping the golden calf. Moses is one of the most prominent figures in the Old Testament and the man God chose to bring the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. God also chose Moses as the mediator of the Old Covenant, and the author of the first five books of the Bible. After the Israelites left Egypt, Moses left the camp to receive the 10 Commandments from God. When he returned to the camp, the Israelites had constructed a calf as an idol, and were dancing and worshipping this false idol. When Moses saw what they had done, he became very angry ¹⁹ So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf *and* the dancing.. In fact, Moses was so angry that he took the tablets containing the 10 commandments that God had given him, threw them down and broke them at the foot of the mountain (Exo. 32:19). In this situation Moses displayed righteous indignation (legitimate anger) at gross sin against God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, Christians should be angry at all types of sinful activity. However, we are told to be angry but not to sin in our anger (Ephes. 4:26). This is what the prophet Jonah did when he disobeyed God. God called the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh to

preach to the people, he fled as far away as he could go in the opposite direction. After being in a storm at sea, swallowed by a giant fish, and being saved, Jonah finally obeyed what God told Him to do. Jonah preached God's message to the people of Nineveh, they repented and were saved. However, instead of Jonah being glad for the people and rejoicing he got angry. He said "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" Even after God reached out to Jonah to provide comfort for Him, Jonah said he was angry enough to die (Jonah 4:9). This type anger is called resentment or rage, and is the type of anger used in a sinful manner.

God also gave us free will which enabled us to bargain. As expected, there is good and bad bargaining in the Bible. The twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had been immersed in continuous sin and God told Abraham that He was going to destroy these cities. Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah through a quite impressive bargaining process, the story is told in the Book of Genesis.

²⁰ And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."...²³ And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? ²⁵ Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" ²⁶ So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

²⁷ Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who *am but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: ²⁸ Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of five*?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*." ²⁹ And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do *it* for the sake of forty." ³⁰ Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there." ³¹ And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty." ³² Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten." ³³ So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place (Gen. 18:20-33).

Here we see Abraham doing some serious, successful bargaining with God that saved the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. I should mention here that bargaining with God does not change His mind. God knows what He's we're going to do and what He's going to do beforehand (Psalm 139:4). Furthermore, God made it clear that He does not change (Mal. 3:6) and that He is the same yesterday today and forever (Heb. 13:8). God knew Abraham would bargain with Him

and God knew that at this point He would spare Sodom and Gomorrah, so this is an example of bargaining being used to accomplish good.

The fact that we cannot change God's mind, makes it clear that we cannot bargain with God. Jacob made a vow (a type of bargaining in his case) to God while he was at Bethel.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (Gen. 28:20-22).

Jacob tried to bargain with God after stealing his brother's blessings but it was completely unnecessary for him to do since God had already promise to bless him anyway. Making promises or vows, trying to bargain with God to gain His favor does not help our situation because God does not change by anything outside of Himself (God's attribute of impassability).

Many of God's servants in the Bible fell into periods of depression. Christians and saints of God are not immune to depression as it is usually triggered by common circumstances that we all encounter in life. We are human and are subject to the pressures of life. However, God does provide means to bring us out of depression, even with encouragement from others. Proverbs 12:25 mentions depression directly, "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression but a good word makes it glad."

King David did a variety of bad deeds during his reign as King and had many terrible consequences as a result. Some of these included committing adultery with Bathsheba, and having her husband Uriah killed, the child born from this illicit relationship died, David failed to discipline his sons. His son Amnon committed the sin of rape and incest; he was murdered by David's other son Absalom. Absalom led a rebellion in an attempt to usurp David's throne. David's "beloved son" Absalom was murdered, and David's throne was restored. It was a bitter victory for a heart-broken father.

These were devastating events in King David's life, and he spent considerable time in depression. We see demonstrations of this depression in some of His Psalms: "Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad?" (Psalm 42:5, NLT). "I am worn out from sobbing. All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears." (Psalm 6:6, NLT).

Even though King David went through these bouts of depression, he was still worshiping and praising God. He was deeply remorseful and went to God with deep, heartfelt repentance (Psalm 51) and God was so pleased with him that He said David was a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). This is a valuable lesson for all of us who go through depression, whether it results from the loss of a loved one or from other types of loss.

After the Israelites sinned, Moses also portrayed some elements of depression when he pleaded with the Lord on their behalf. He said, “But now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written.” (Exo. 32:32).

Job was a righteous man of God, blameless and upright (Job 1:1), yet he lost practically everything he owned. In addition to losing his animals, his servants, his children, he suffered great physical illness, losing even his health. To make matters worse, he had three “friends” who blamed him for his woes. He also had a wife who obviously did not have his best interest in heart when she told him to curse God and die (Job 2:9). Still Job remained faithful to God.

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said: ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.’
²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing (Job 1:20-22).

Job was clearly in a state of depression after all of this but instead of cursing God, he fell to the ground and worshipped Him (verse 20). This is a wonderful example for us all who go through bouts of depression.

Elijah was a great man of faith who challenged the prophets of the false god, Baal to a contest to see who was truly God. The challenge was to see whose God could bring fire down from heaven. At the end of the contest, Jehovah was indisputably proven to be the one and only true God. This was only one event which was a great demonstration of faith Elijah had. Yet after Queen Jezebel threatens to kill him, he runs into the wilderness with great fear, sits under a juniper tree and goes into a depression so severe that he prays for death (1 Kings 19:4).

When it comes to the acceptance stage of grief, it is more than obvious that God gave us the ability to accept situations, circumstances, and offers when we review the doctrine of salvation. Salvation is the deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin. It is given freely to those who accept by faith God’s conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The key word here for the recipient is “accept” as one must accept this free gift in order to be saved (Acts 2:41). To accept it one must have the ability to accept, and this ability is given by God to all human beings. It is only available in Christ alone (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus originally called 12 disciples who accepted His offer of salvation and with the exception of Judas, they took the lead in starting and expanding the New Testament church, which continues to grow to this day, some 2,000 years later.

When we look at all of these stories (and several others in the Bible) we see that God is the source of emotions for good, and that God was with these servants each and every time as they went through these emotions (Psalm 34:18). As we go through these emotions during our stages of grief, it is important to keep in mind that these are not unique to us alone as we all undergo them from time to time in our lives. It is also important to remember that God gave us these emotions for good, and He is always accessible to us during our periods of grief.

In my grief counseling sessions as Pastor, I found these stages of death to be very helpful in bringing understanding and comfort to family members, friends, and loved ones of the deceased. Furthermore, I find incorporating these stages with biblical principles while counseling to be a superb helpful strategy. As include this chapter on grief I do so in the prayerful hope that it may be beneficial to someone who is reading this book.

It is important to understand that not every person goes through each of these stages and those that do, do not necessarily go through them in any specific order. This is because each individual grieves differently just as we all have different personalities. For example, you may see some surviving family members get rid of all clothing, jewelry and other personal effects belonging to the deceased immediately after he or she dies. Others may hold on to these items for long periods of time, even after they died. Furthermore, grieving love ones usually express anger at anyone who attempts to suggest that they should get rid of those personal effects. It stands to reason then that there is no standard or typical way of grieving the loss of a loved one. In most writings on this subject, the order in which these stages are discussed are as listed above so this is the order I take in this chapter.

Denial

When I began studying this subject and heard about the denial stage of grief, I immediately thought that it meant the surviving person simply and literally refused to believe that their loved one has died. I later learned that there are many others who have the same belief upon hearing of this stage. Since this belief is only partially true, the denial stage of grief needs a more detailed explanation. Denial in the loss of a loved one is not quite as literal as it is symbolic. Even though you know your loved one has literally died, you find it difficult to believe that he or she is not going to come though that front door from work at 5:30pm as they did for the past 20 or 30 years. You find it difficult to believe that you won't be going to church together, visiting others together, watching TV together and many other things that you have been doing together for many years. Deep within your spirit and soul, you know that person is gone and won't be returning, but you just find it difficult to believe; and you find yourself saying, "I just don't believe he's not here." "I just don't believe she will not be calling me on the phone anymore." Even during the period of making funeral arrangements, and even after the funeral ceremony has long ended, the surviving loved one may still find him or herself making these type statements. But while making these statements, he or she is aware that the deceased loved one is literally dead and is not coming back. This is what it means when we say a person is in the denial stage of grief. Not that the surviving loved one literally refuses to believe or accept the reality of the deceased but that in making the adjustment to a new lifestyle, he or she frequently makes statements of disbelief. This is how the denial stage of grief works.

It may be somewhat surprising to know that the denial stage of grief does have some benefits for the surviving loved one. This stage is the first stage of grief and as such the surviving loved

one is in disbelief, hurt, pain, and sometime even shock as well as other upsetting emotions. This combination of agonizing feelings can become overwhelming when inflicted simultaneously. Being in the denial stage is nature's way of resisting some of these emotions and letting in only those that an individual can mentally and emotionally handle at one time. It is God's way of protecting the individual from complete mental and emotional breakdowns. As time goes on these emotions begin to subside, as the surviving loved one moves to other stages of grief and makes necessary adjustments.

Anger

When a loved one dies anger frequently emerges as one of the stages of grief. This anger can take many different forms. One of the questions that comes to mind is who is the surviving loved one angry with? The survivors may be angry at God for taking their loved ones. They may be angry at the deceased for leaving them. They may be angry at the doctors and hospitals for not taking better care of their deceased loved ones or angry at the deceased for not taking better care of him or herself. They may be angry at themselves for not preventing their loved ones from dying. Sometimes surviving spouses are angry because they're left behind without financial resources to meet liabilities and other needs.

The survivor knows intellectually that their loved one in most cases did not want to die. However, rational thought does not always take precedent when one is in this situation, and they just know that their loved one has died and is no longer with them. One may argue, how can someone get angry with God for taking their loved one when He's the one that gave the loved one life in the first place? Still, it is not uncommon to hear some form of anger directed to God in these death situations. We often hear questions such as, "Where is God in all of this? "Why did God let this happen?" Could this possibly be God's will?" Isn't God supposed to be a God of love?" "Is God angry at me for something I've done?" Perhaps when our loved one was sick, we prayed for God's healing but our loved one eventually died anyway. Our faith is shaken, and we find it difficult to understand why God didn't answer our prayers. After all, we were faithful church goers, praising and worshiping, attending Bible studies classes, serving others, and serving God. So what on earth is God doing by taking our loved ones? Doesn't He reward us for our good works? In these situations, it helps to realize that it is also God who made it abundantly clear that *everyone* is going to die (Heb. 9:27). As shown earlier in this book, death simply means separation from the body, and it is God's way of bringing us into eternity with Him (for those who died in the faith).

When people are angry at God for taking a loved one or not saving a loved one, they are in a very fragile and emotional state. If they are church goers, they usually find some degree of comfort from Christian brethren in the congregation. However, many times Christians do not know how to comfort or what to say and this can lead to saying the wrong thing. When this happens, their efforts to comfort can be more harmful than helpful. Consider the following situation.

"When Heather's teenage daughter died at sixteen, Heather was furious at God for allowing her to die so young with a life so unlived. Heather's family were deeply

involved in the church that had been a strong support during her daughter's illnesses, but they had difficulty dealing with Heather's anger. She no longer wanted to hear about the God who answers prayers since her prayers had not been answered. She felt judged by her friends at church for having so much anger at God. A friend said to her cautiously, "Be careful not to evoke the wrath of God." At that Heather was ever more enraged. "What is he going to do," she retorted, "take my daughter away? What's he going to do, take me? That would be fine. I'd rather be with her than be here." Her friend knelt down and said tenderly, "Let's pray for forgiveness." At that moment Heather decided to leave behind her church and a number of friends. It was years before she walked back into the church."¹⁶

As helpful as her Christian friend was trying to be, she obviously took the wrong approach in helping Heather. When these type situations arise it is best not to say anything to the grieving loved one than to say something that's harmful. It is better to simply say, "Let's pray" or "I am praying for you and your family" and let the verbal counseling to someone who is more trained or experienced with grief.

The truth is that anger has no limits. It is important to realize that anger is a necessary part of the healing process, and it helps to be willing to feel this anger. The more you feel this anger, the sooner the healing will take place. There are several other emotions taking place beneath this anger (e.g., pain, guilt, etc.). However, we generally chose to deal with anger in an effort to avoid confronting other emotions. Throughout the grieving process, however, anger will emerge in many different forms. It is helpful to apply techniques to externalize anger rather than holding it in. You will feel better if you tell your friends and associates how angry you are. If possible, get grief counseling. If you feel like screaming, then do so but try to do this when no one else is around. They may not understand and attempt to have you committed as someone with mental issues. Sometimes, you may feel guilty during this stage of grief. Guilt is simply anger turned inwardly; anger turned towards yourself. While this feeling is real, it is important to realize that you could not have prevented that deceased one from dying (of course this is assuming that you were not the cause of that person's death). If you could've prevented the deceased death, you would have.

Bargaining

According to the American Psychological Association the bargaining stage of grief is characterized by an attempt to negotiate a deal with God or fate that would delay one's own death or that of an important other, or that would mitigate or end other great loss or trauma (footnote, <https://dictionary.apa.org.org/bargaining>). In other words. A person in the bargaining stage of grief tries to make an arrangement with God that would help to relieve the pain of grief resulting from a loss. In fact, each stage of grief is one in which the bereaved tries in one way or another to mitigate the pain of loss. But bargaining usually involves promising God that you will do or not do something if He would save a loved one from dying, bring a loved one back, or some other action to help ease the pain resulting from a loss.

¹⁶ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler. *On Grief and Grieving*; Scribner, 14.

This bargaining stage covers a wide range of situations. For example, we may bargain that God save our loved ones from death, save our loved ones from pain, take our lives rather than a love one, take us along with our love ones, etc. When we bargain with God and are not successful, guilt, pain, despair, and a variety of other emotions tend to surface. Furthermore, bargaining is filled with “what ifs and “if only” statements. Consider the example from Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross below:

As Howard turned seventy-five, he was determined to keep himself and his sixty-six-year-old wife, Millie, in good health. He had read somewhere that walking every day would keep them fit, possibly ward off Alzheimer’s, and help them sleep better. Millie knew it was easier to go along with the program than to resist.

On the sixth day, after they returned from a busy morning of errands, Howard got ready for their walk. Millie looked at Howard and said, “Do we have to do this every day? A day off won’t hurt.”

Howard lectured, “It takes thirty days to create a habit. We have to do this every day, no matter what.”

Millie rolled her eyes and said, “Can we at least wait until later? We just got in.” He grabbed her sweater. “Let’s just get this over with. You’ll be happy when it’s done.” They walked a block and stepped into the crosswalk. When they were halfway across the street a car came barreling around the corner and struck them, Millie first, then Howard. In a moment a disoriented Howard looked up and saw Millie lying on the pavement a few feet away. Suddenly someone was asking him if he was okay. He responded, “My wife!” The paramedics assured him that they were taking care of her.

At the hospital Howard was treated for numerous bruises and a broken arm. Millie was not as fortunate. She had sustained massive internal injuries and was taken to surgery. Howard sat surrounded by family, repeating over and over in his mind, “Please God, let her live-I’ll never make Millie do anything she doesn’t want to do...I’ll be a better person...you’ll see, I’ll volunteer, I’ll devote my life to you...please, not now. The surgeon walked in an hour later and said, “I’m sorry we couldn’t save her.”¹⁷

One can only imagine the deep pain and sorrow Howard must have felt. He would be thinking, “What if I said we can walk later?” “What if I had walked a different route?” “What if I had not started this walking in the first place?” “What if I had purchased a treadmill for walking?” There are many “what ifs” and “if only” in these situations because of the pain and sorrow one feels. Under all of that pain and sorrow is an underlying guilt since he practically forced his wife to go, even against her wishes. You can see the bargaining Howard attempted with God after he saw Millie lying on the pavement with massive internal injuries, and the paramedics assured him that they were taking care of her. He bargained with God to save her and that he would volunteer (no doubt to do some type of charitable work), that he would devote his life to God. This is how bargaining works.

¹⁷ Ibid. 17-18.

There are actually some benefits to the bargaining stage of grief. Bargaining is used as a temporary release from the pain brought on by the grief. If the loss is allowed to sink in deeply, you are admitting, even though you've not yet ready, that the loss is real and final. The mind doesn't want that so bargaining is the mind's way of pushing off the reality; it is actually fighting off the truth, sort of in a postponing manner. Deep within, the grieving party knows that nothing will come out of the bargaining, but it gives the mind some momentary relief, as it prepares itself to accept this reality.

Depression

The next stage of grief is called depression. According to the American Psychiatric Association, depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. It can cause feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed, and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems.¹⁸

Depression symptoms can range from mild to severe and after bargaining one can go into a stage of depression on any of these levels. It is not a sign of mental illness however, but a normal appropriate response to the loss of someone deeply loved. Depression is real and it is quite unnatural for someone to not undergo some form of depression at the loss of a loved one. Furthermore, during this stage of grief, depression usually comes and goes, and it can hit especially hard during periods of birthdays of the deceased or when there are holidays when the survivor had been active with the deceased (Father's Day, Mother's Day, Christmas, Easter, etc.). While grief depression is not a mental illness it can lead to clinical depression, and clinical depression may require professional help. Dr. Kubler-Ross stated this regarding the two:

Clinical depression is a group of illnesses that may be characterized by a long-term or excessively depressed state. But our society often considers an appropriate sadness to be depression requiring fixing. Normal depression is the sadness we feel at certain times in our lives, the common cold of mental illnesses. We even have television advertisements offering help with it, selling pills promising to get rid of it. When a normal depression becomes a clinical depression requiring professional help, antidepressants may be helpful for a time.¹⁹

Acceptance

Many people believe that acceptance means everything is all right now and the grieving person is satisfied with what has happened. This is not the case at all. Acceptance means that we are now facing the reality that our loved one is permanently gone, not coming back, and adjustments must be made because of this new situation. Acceptance is about reaching a point of acknowledging that the loss has occurred and that he or she must now learn to live with this loss. It takes time to reach this stage and it helps to not interfere with the process by saying things like, "you must get over it." Or "It's been six months now so when are you going to accept that John

¹⁸ <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>.

¹⁹ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler. *On Grief and Grieving*; Scribner. 23.

is not coming back?” The surviving loved one must come through this at his or her own pace in order to have a healthier acceptance stage. Furthermore, the time for reaching this stage varies with each individual.

It does help, however, to think of the fact that the deceased loved one may have been in pain and suffering, that the deceased loved one may have been ready and willing for God to take them out of this life for whatever reason. If the deceased is an elderly person, it helps to focus on the fact that he or she has been blessed by God to have lived a long life. And it also helps to focus on any accomplishment and achievement the deceased has in his or her life. If the deceased is a Christian believer, it is helpful to remember that he or she is with God and experiencing eternal pleasures at the right hand of God (Psalm 16:11) and that the grieving survivor will see him or her again, if they too die in the faith.

CHAPTER 6

Heaven – The Final Destination of the Saved

Practically everyone has heard of a place called heaven, even from a young age, whether Christian or non-Christian. We’ve heard that it is a beautiful, glorified, magnificent, place of eternal pleasure. Because of this most people, who believe, express a desire to go to heaven here after they die. There are also quite a bit of untruths and myths about heaven. For example, heaven is a place in the clouds, and we will float around on a cloud 24/7, perhaps playing a harp. It is a place where we will be bored with nothing to do but stay in church service each and every day. We also hear that everyone will go to heaven after death. Many books have been written and movies made about heaven – truth and myths. Since heaven is the final destination of followers of Jesus Christ, in this Chapter I will give you a biblical description of what heaven is, who will be there, what we will be doing there, and other aspects about the nature of heaven.

Location of Heaven

There are three heavens mentioned in the Bible so we will begin by describing each. The first heaven is the earth’s atmosphere. This is sometimes referred to as the atmospheric heaven, which is the area of breathable atmosphere that blankets the earth. We see an example of this in Genesis. “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:11-12). In this verse we see that heaven is used to show a blanket of atmosphere around the world. This is the first heaven.

The second heaven can be referred to as the planetary heaven. This is where the planets, moon, and stars are located. We also see an example of this in the very first book of the Bible.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let

them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. 16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth (Gen. 1:14-17).

As we see from these verses, the second heaven contains the sky, sun, moon, stars, (lights in the firmament).

The third heaven is the abode of God, sometimes referred to as paradise. Paul speaks of the third heaven in his second letter to the Corinthian church.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Cor. 12:2-4).

This third heaven is the heaven where God dwells with His holy angels and those saints who have died. It is God’s unique home, His center of operations and command post. It is where His throne dwells. The first and second heaven will pass away (2 Peter 3:10). This third heaven is eternal.

Heaven Today

Sometimes people ask if heaven is a real place, but we can be certain that heaven is indeed a real place as Jesus made it clear. Before ascending to heaven Jesus made the following statements to His disciples:

In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (John 14:2-4, emphasis mine).

Jesus said I’m going to prepare a *place* for you so right away we know that heaven is a real place. However, the Bible shows that heaven is not limited to what we know as height, width, and breadth. Instead, it apparently spans all of those dimensions and even more. In the book of Revelation, Jesus spoke of the “the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God (Rev. 3:12). John wrote “And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God “(Rev. 21:10). So heaven is not confined or limited to our measurable boundaries, and space-time dimensions as we know them today.

There is also another sense in which heaven transcends normal space-time dimensions. This is in a spiritual sense since all Christian believers are considered to already be in heaven at the present time. The Apostle Paul said that “our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

He went on to say that “.. even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephes. 2:5-6).

In these verses Paul is talking about a reality that has already taken place because the verb used here is past tense. This means that spiritually and positionally, because of our spiritual union with Jesus we already possess eternal life and have already been seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.

The Glory of Heaven

For the future the Bible speaks of a new heaven and new earth. In the Book of Revelation, after the resurrection, John wrote of a new heaven and new earth.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God (Rev. 21:1-3).

John said he saw a new heaven and new earth, and that the first heaven and first earth had passed away. Here we see God rearranging everything for Himself and mankind to live in eternity. After the seven-year tribulation, the battle of Armageddon, the 1,000-year millennium reign of Christ and the great white-throne judgment, the present heaven will be combined with the future heaven. The future heaven contains the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem. The holy city, the new Jerusalem will come down out of heaven like a beautiful bride. At this time, God is coming down to earth to live with us.

When John says “new heaven” and “new earth” exactly what does he mean by the term *new*? Does this mean that God will completely destroy the current heaven (earth’s atmosphere and outer space) and current earth and create them new? Does it mean that He will remake or restructure them to make them new? There are two main views on these questions. One is sometimes called the replacement view and the other the renewal view. Those holding the replacement view believe that God will totally annihilate the heavens and earth; and create brand new heavens and earth ex nihilo (out of nothing). Then there are those who believe that God will simply purge the heavens and earth; and renew them; a makeover so to speak.

Replacement View

Those who believe the heavens and earth will be totally destroyed normally point to Peter's epistle.

But the *heavens and the earth which are now preserved* by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the *heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?* Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:7-13, emphasis mine).

When one reads these words by Peter, we see that he made it clear that the heavens and earth will be burned up. He even emphasized this point by repeating it a second time, "the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" (v. 12). The Apostle John made a similar statement when he said, "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea (Rev. 21:1).

Isaiah also made a prophecy regarding the new heavens; "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." (Isa. 65:17).

When we consider all these prophecies, they certainly lend support to the belief that the present heavens and earth will be completely destroyed, and a new heaven and earth created.

Renewal View

Then there are those who hold the renewal view. As indicated earlier the renewal view proponents believe that the new heavens and new earth will be this present universe; purified of all sin, suffering, evil, and death. Bible scholars holding this view point to the fact that the Greek word used to designate the newness of the cosmos is not *neos* but *kainos*. *Neos* means "new in time" or "new in origin." *Kainos* on the other hand means "new in nature" or new in quality." Therefore, when the phrase "new heavens and a new earth" is used it is not referring to a cosmos that is completely different from the present one. Instead, it is referring to a new cosmos in continuity with the present cosmos, totally renewed and renovated.²⁰

²⁰ Ron Rhodes, *The Wonder of Heaven*; 153.

Bible commentator William Hendrickson said, “It is the same heaven and earth, but gloriously rejuvenated, with no weeds, thorns or thistles.”²¹ J. Oswald Sanders said, “The picture is of the universe transformed, perfected, purged of everything that is evil and that exalts itself against God. It is ‘new,’ not in the sense of being a new creation but of being new in character – a worthy milieu for the residents of God’s redeemed people.”²²

John Piper said, “What happens to our bodies and what happens to the creation go together. And what happens to our bodies is not annihilation but redemption... Our bodies will be redeemed, restored, made new, not thrown away. And so it is with the heavens and the earth.”²³

Referring to the Bible, Ron Rhodes made the following statements: “Matthew 19:28 (NASB) thus speaks of “the regeneration” (see Isaiah 65:18-25; Ezekiel 28:25-26; 34:25-30). The new heavens and earth, like our newness in Christ, will be regenerated, glorified, free from the curse of sin, and eternal. Acts 3:21 thus speaks of the “restoration of all things” (NASB).²⁴

Randy Alcorn stated that we should pay careful attention to the words we find throughout the Bible; “Reconcile, Redeem, Restore, Recover, Return, Renew. Regenerate, Resurrect. Each of these biblical words begins with the *re*-prefix, suggesting a *return to an original condition* that was ruined or lost.”²⁵

So as we see there are convincing arguments on each side of this debate. However, whatever view you hold, we know that we will be living for all eternity in a glorified new heaven and new earth. Furthermore, the view you hold will not affect your salvation, as this is not an essential doctrine of the Christian faith.

One may ask, however, why is it necessary to create a new heaven and new earth (whether replacement or renew)? As you recall in the creation account, God created the world in six days, and says everything was “very good.” (Gen. 1:31). After Adam and Eve sinned, God placed a curse upon the earth (Gen. 3:17-18). Paul wrote about this curse in his letter to the Church at Rome.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now (Rom. 8:20-25).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. 133-134.

²⁴ Ibid. 134.

²⁵ Ibid.

Paul is making it clear here that the creation, the heavens and earth, and all other created things, were subjected to hopelessness because of God's curse. This curse, of course came about as the result of the fall of man, as we've shown. Notice that he said the "whole" creation is groaning and laboring with birth pains (v. 22). This includes everybody and everything. So before the eternal kingdom can be manifested, God has to deal with the condition of the universe. The earth, as well as the first and second heaven must be renewed.

Heaven is a Place of the Beatific Vision

When we say "Beatific Vision" we are referring to what Jesus promises when we are pure in heart (Matt. 5:8). It is what the writer of Hebrews means when he tells of a "holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14). In other words we will be glorified in heaven with a holiness that will enable us to "see the Lord," The Apostle Paul said we now only "see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face"(1 Cor. 13:12). In the book of Revelation John said, "They will see his face" (Rev.22:4). The beatific vision is the sight that makes you happy. Simply put the beatific vision is all that we will see when we see God "face to face." This is a promise from God for us when we get into heaven.

We can derive at least eight characteristics from the beatific vision we will have after we get into heaven.²⁶

- (1) The Beatific Vision Brings Us Direct Knowledge of God. As of now we only know God indirectly. Paul said we know God indirectly through His creation. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen *being understood from what has been made*" (Rom.1:20, emphasis mine). Once we come into the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven, we will see and know God directly. What was dim will now be bright and what we once knew indirectly we will know directly. In heaven we will have a full and direct knowledge of God.
- (2) The Beatific Vision Brings Us Perfect Knowledge of God. Ultimately, our knowledge of God will be perfect (1 Cor. 13:9-10). The partial knowledge we now have will be whole knowledge, and what we can know about God, we will know it perfectly. This does not mean however, that we will know all there is to know about God. It's important to keep in mind that God is an infinite Being and we are finite Beings, even after we're glorified in heaven. Finite minds cannot fully comprehend all there is to know about an infinite Being. What I'm saying here is that what we can know about God, all knowledge that we have of God, will be perfect knowledge. We will know Him perfectly in that sense.
- (3) The Beatific Vision Brings Us Perfect Love of God. Jesus tells us to love God with everything we have. Notice His words in the gospel of Matthew.

²⁶ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Volume 4*, 305-308.

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment (Matt. 22:37-38).

Jesus tells us that this is the “first and great commandment” yet, we know this is impossible for us to do in our current human state. When we are glorified in the Kingdom of heaven this is the kind of love we will attain for God. This is the beatific vision, perfect love.

- (4) The Beatific Vision Makes Sin Impossible. Can you even imagine how wonderful it would be when literally impossible for us to sin? Today, in our current state we sin in word, thought, and deed (Matt. 5:21-37). This is even after we have received God’s Holy Spirit. But once we’re in the Kingdom of Heaven, we will have glorified bodies and cannot even think sinfully. We won’t do sin or speak sinfully. The beatific vision makes this possible.
- (5) The Beatific Vision Fulfills Our Freedom. Heaven fulfills our freedom to completely love God. One may think that if our freedom is fulfilled, then we have the freedom to sin. This is not what freedom with the beatific vision does. True freedom is not the freedom to do evil but the freedom to do good. God is both perfectly free yet unable to sin. This is how we will be when we are in heaven.
- (6) The Beatific Vision is Only Given to Believers. God does not force the beatific vision on anyone. It is freely given to those who honestly want it as it is impossible to force someone to love you. Forced love is a contradiction which brings about confusion, but God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
- (7) The Beatific Vision Brings us a Permanent State of Perfection. The fact that we’re currently growing toward perfection is evidence that we’re not yet perfect. When we achieve the last stage of salvation, which is called glorification, we will be saved from the presence of sin and therefore made perfect. God is changeless perfection and once we’re made perfect, we will no longer change this moral attribute.
- (8) The Beatific Vision Brings us a Dynamic State of Perfection.

When we are in heaven we will be in an immutable (unchanging) state of perfection, but this does not mean that we will be in a static state. In other words, we will be in an immutable state of perfection but not in an immobile state of perfection. Note that God is immutable (Heb. 6:18) but not immobile. This is how we will be in heaven except we will be this way in a finite sense, not infinite as God. We will become not less active but more active working, praising, enjoying, and serving Him. We will not be seeking but we will be enjoying and treasuring what we have found. Our minds will not be searching for truth but enjoying the truth that we have found. This will give us eternal pleasure in the present of the Lord (Psalm 16:11).

One cannot help but think of how gloriously different heaven will be from the current world in which we now live. We are currently in a world that is wicked, vile, corrupt, and getting progressively worse in a seemingly exponential fashion. When we get into the new heaven just consider a partial list of the institutions and events that we will no longer see or hear about. For example, there will be no more:

- Funeral Homes
- Abortion Clinics
- Divorce Courts
- Brothels
- Bankruptcy Courts
- Psychiatric Wards
- Pornography
- Teen Suicides
- AIDS
- Cancer
- Talk Shows
- Rape
- Missing Children
- Drug Problems
- Drive-By Shootings
- Racial Tension
- Injustice
- Depression
- Gossip
- Hurt Feelings
- Worry
- Child Abuse
- Wars
- Financial Worries
- Emotional Heartaches
- Physical Pain
- Relational Divisions
- Murders
- Tears
- Suffering
- Separations
- Starvation
- Arguments
- Accidents
- Emergency Departments
- Doctors and Nurses

- Heart Monitors
- False Teachers
- Financial Shortages
- Hurricanes
- Bad Habits
- Locks
- Confession of Sin
- Apologizing
- Resisting Satan
- Resisting Temptation

and we can continue adding to the list of negative and harmful institutions, events, and situations which will all be permanently gone as we enter into the presence of our Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven forever.

CHAPTER 7

Hell – The Final Destination of the Unsaved

It is not likely that you will find many sermons or Bible studies on hell. Heaven, yes but not hell. Yet, according to the Bible, hell is just real as heaven. Jesus made it abundantly clear that hell is a real place that will be the ultimate destination for Satan, the demons, and all human beings who are unsaved. Many unbelievers have questioned the existence of hell and even more have asserted the injustice of hell. We have all sinned against God (Rom. 3:23) and the just punishment for sin is death (Rom 6:23). This is the way it has to be because of God's holy, righteous, perfect nature. Furthermore, all sin is against God and because God is an infinite and eternal Being, the punishment for sin, death, must also be infinite and eternal. Hell is this infinite and eternal death which we have earned because of our sin.

Hell is a place of final damnation and there are several names for this place of final damnation for the unsaved in the Bible. The Old Testament Hebrew word for hell is *sheol*, which means the unseen world. The word *sheol* is often used of the grave, wherein the body is unseen, but it is also sometimes used to refer to the world of spirits. In the New Testament, the Greek word for hell is *hades* and it usually specifies a place of departed wicked spirits. Also, the word *Gehenna* is often translated using the word hell. The valley of Gehenna was a putrid dump outside Jerusalem that burned perpetually. In referencing eternal damnation for fallen angels, the New Testament also uses the word *tartaroo* (2 Pet.2:4). Tartarus was envisioned by the Greeks as a subterranean place even lower than hades. So we see the various terms used in the Bible for the final destination of the unsaved. This information will help us by giving us better understanding as we come across these terms during Bible study and research.

Old Testament Teaching on Hell

Some doctrines in the Bible are revealed progressively, i.e., more implied in the Old Testament then more developed as we go into the New Testament. The Trinity is one example of this, but the doctrine of hell is another such example. The doctrine of hell was progressively implied in the Old Testament as we see in the following verses.

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” (Gen.3:15).

As we continue reading through the Scriptures, we learn that the Seed of the woman mentioned here in this verse was none other than Jesus Christ. His heel was bruised by Satan but He crushed Satan’s head. This was officially done at the cross but was actually carried out as we read in the last book of the Bible. It is in the Book of Revelation that we see the devil’s final defeat when he is cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Another Old Testament passage of Scriptures is found in Isaiah’s prophecy,

“For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me,” says the Lord, “So shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³ And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another, All flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the Lord. ²⁴ “And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For *their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched.* They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:22-24, emphasis mine).

Verse 24 in this passage of Scriptures is referring to those who sinned against God and did not repent. Their worm not dying, and fire not quenched is referring to the perpetual fire burning in hell.

New Testament Teaching on Hell

In the New Testament, Jesus talked more about hell than He did about heaven. He repeatedly affirmed the existence of hell, as He clearly does not want to see anyone go there (2 Peter 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4).

²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell (Matt. 5:29-30).

It is clear that Jesus is not teaching self-mutilation here because even if one pluck out his eye, he can still lust after the flesh and other material things. Also, if one cuts off his hand he can still steal because sin begins in the heart (Jer. 17:9). Jesus is using what biblical scholars call a hyperbole, which is a figure of speech that deliberately exaggerates to make a powerful point.

Jesus wanted to use strong, graphic language, to emphasize how utterly dangerous sin is and how it can lead to eternal damnation in hell. But the point we're making here is that the doctrine of hell is taught very strongly in the New Testament by Jesus.

Jesus not only just talked about hell, He made it clear enough to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees that if they did not change they would be condemned to hell.

¹⁵“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of] hell as yourselves...³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? (Matt. 23:15, 33).

There are many other Scriptures on hell in both the Old and New Testament and I don't think anyone who seriously reads these verses would honestly say that the doctrine of hell is not a realistic one.

The Nature of Hell

No one likes to talk about hell because of its horrifying nature. As mentioned above Jesus gives us quite a bit of information about hell, obviously He doesn't want anyone to go there. In a brief description of hell, Christian philosopher and apologist Dr. Norman Geisler said that “Hell is like being left inside in the dark forever. Hell is like a wandering star, a waterless cloud, a perpetually burning dump, a bottomless pit, an everlasting prison. Hell is a place of anguish and regret.”²⁷

Some atheists, critics, and skeptics believe and teach that hell is a place of torture, but this is not what the Bible teaches. A place of torture is where people are forced to be there against their will. Hell is just the opposite as no one is forced into hell against their will. Each person that goes to hell makes a deliberate, conscious choice to reject the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and therefore choose to go to hell. While hell is not a place of torture, Jesus does teach that hell is a place of torment. Torment is self-inflicted and Jesus said it is a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22:13). Furthermore, everyone in hell will be forever aware that it is their own actions (or inaction) that placed them there. This makes the pain ever worse as there is nothing anyone can do to correct it at this point. Hell is an eternal separation from God and there is a great gulf that is fixed between heaven and hell (Luke 16:26), meaning there is no communication or contact between the inhabitants of each place.

Hell is also depicted as a place of eternal fire, but this is probably not the physical fire that we are familiar with today. While the fire is real, many theologians believe it to be some modified version, different from what we are familiar with when we speak of fire today. This is because the Bible uses figures of speech in describing some of the characteristics of hell. For example,

²⁷ Ibid. 337-338.

fire has flames and gives light, yet the Bible describes hell as a place with outer darkness (Matt. 22:13). Hell is a dump and dumps have bottoms. Yet hell is described as a bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1). Figures of speech are frequently used in the Bible and must be distinguished by carefully and prayerfully reviewing the context in which they are used. When we say that the fire in hell is probably not the fire that we know of today, this should not give anyone comfort about going there. Some people feel a sense of relief to know that hell fire is different from the fire that we are familiar with. I would like to point out here that many times when the Bible uses a metaphor or other figure of speech, the real meaning is far greater or worse than the figure of speech describes. God uses this language to demonstrate what is the worse that we know of but the true torment in hell is likely much worse than normal fire in which we are familiar. In fact, we know it's much worse in some sense because for one this fire in hell, whatever kind it is, never goes out.

Many refuse to believe that hell is unending, and they say that people will be annihilated rather than tormented forever. Annihilation is a false doctrine that has no biblical support whatsoever. Dr. Norman Geisler stated the following on this matter:

“Annihilation of the wicked is contrary to both the nature of God and the nature of humans made in His image. It is not consistent with the character of an all-loving God to snuff out the souls of those who do not do His wishes; can you imagine an earthly father killing his children for not doing what he wants them to do? Further, were God to annihilate human beings, He would be attacking himself, for we are made in His image (Gen. 1:27), and He is immortal. That these persons will be suffering does not justify annihilating them anymore than having a child in pain justifies smothering him. Annihilationism violates God's nature and human freedom, as recognized not only by believers but also by some who have denied God. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) who held that annihilation is not preferable to conscious freedom, once wrote, “I would rather will nothingness than not to will at all.”²⁸

Dr. Geisler quotes Friedrich Nietzsche because Nietzsche was a well known die-hard atheist. Yet even he agreed that annihilationism is worse than having life....

It must be considered that heaven is everlasting and so is hell. There is not one iota of biblical support to suggest that heaven is forever but hell is temporary because people will be annihilated.

Because of the horrendous nature of hell, many people do not believe that hell is an actual place. After all, how could a God of love create an entity so devastatingly painful to human beings? Actually, it is because of God's love that He created hell.

The Love of God Requires Hell

²⁸ Ibid. 339.

We know from Scriptures that God is love (1 John 4:8). While God is love which is inherent in His character, He gives us that love and teach us how to love (1 John 4:19). God gives us love and teaches us to love so that He can bring us into eternity with Him. However, love is a virtue that must be chosen as God cannot force us to love Him. Forced love is a contradiction. Since love must be chosen, God had to give us the ability to make choices. The ability that He gives us to choose without being forced by Him is called free will. But because we have free will to choose to love we can also choose not to love. Many choose not to love God, so He has to release them as this is what they prefer. Those who choose to not love God are released and separated from God for all eternity. This is what hell is, to be separated from God for all eternity.

Human Sinful Nature Requires Hell

The Bible repeatedly tells us that human beings are sinful in nature. Consider the following passages of Scriptures:

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

This is the human heart being talked about here and the prophet Jeremiah said it is deceitful above *all things*. Now this certainly says a lot about human nature.

Notice what God said about mankind who think they are good.

¹⁰ As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹² They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” ¹³ “Their throat *is* an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps *is* under their lips”; ¹⁴ “Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness.” ¹⁵ “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.” ¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Rom. 3:10-18).

This is a vivid description of the human depravity in man, and it is indeed an accurate description as many of us can attest to by just thinking about our experiences in life. Surely, most, if not all of us have had individuals in our lives that displayed some of these characteristics. This is the fallen nature of human beings. Some of us believe that we are pretty good in our character but when we make these assessments of ourselves, we are usually comparing them with other people who display worse characteristics. We must use Jesus as our standard of good. God made it abundantly clear that the good we think we are, is nothing but filthy rags when compared to Him (Isa. 64:6).

To make matters worse, with all of this fallen nature, we are rebellious and refuse to repent.

²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Rom. 1:21-23).

While we humans have all of these sinful aspects to our nature, all of this depravity, God is absolutely perfect (Matt. 5:48) and cannot coexist with sinful, rebellious, unrepentant people. God's wrath is absolutely necessary in this situation.

The Cross of Jesus Assures us There's a Hell

Before dying on the cross Jesus was betrayed by one of disciples and denied three times by another. He was falsely convicted in a kangaroo court even though He was innocent. He was beaten, spat upon, mocked and humiliated. He had a crown of thorns thrust upon His head, nails driven into His hands and feet, and a spear thrust into His side. All of this was so devastatingly painful to Him that Luke, a doctor by trade, recorded, "And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground." (Luke 22:44).

Jesus went through unimaginable agony and torture before dying on the cross. Shortly before Jesus went to the cross, He spent time in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples; and just before He was arrested, He prayed to His Father three times asking His Father if there was any other way to save mankind, please let it be done. Matthew wrote, "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*." (Matt. 26:39). Two very important points can be derived from this verse: (1) Jesus said, "*If it is possible*, let this cup pass from Me." And (2) He said "not as I will *but as You will*."(emphasis mine in both quotes). Jesus was always obedient to the will of the Father, regardless of the circumstances. But notice that in His human nature, He asked His Father if there was any other way. The fact that Jesus went to the cross and died, showed that there was no other way for the redemption of mankind. So we must ask the question, if there was some other way to redeem mankind would Jesus have gone to the cross and died? Absolutely not! If there was no hell to avoid, everything that Jesus went through was meaningless. All of this would not have been necessary if there is no hell. Jesus went through this entire awful terrifying, ordeal to prevent those who are willing to accept His atoning sacrifice, from going to hell.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Questions and Answers About Heaven

1. Is heaven an actual place or state of mind?

Heaven is most definitely not a state of mind. If it were, those in the right state of mind would be in heaven now while they're right here on earth but we know this is not the case. Heaven is a real place. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a *place* for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. **4** And where I go you know, and the way you know." (John. 14:2-4, emphasis mine). You will notice that Jesus said He was going to prepare a "place." (Also see Matt. 6:9-10; Rev. 21:9-27).

2. Where is heaven located?

At the current time, before the resurrection, heaven is the abode of righteous human souls and angelic spirits in the presence of God (2 Cor. 5:8; Heb. 12:23). It can either be in a distant place in the universe, or in another dimension. After the Millennium, heaven will descend to earth, and heaven will be a part of "the New Heaven and the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:12-13, Matt. 6:10). Stated differently, at that time, we can think of heaven as being everywhere except where hell is located.

3. What is the third heaven talked about in the Bible?

The Bible makes reference to the "third heaven" (2 Cor. 12:2); which is the ineffable and glorious dwelling place of God. It is also called the "heaven of heavens" (Neh. 9:6) and the "highest heaven" (1 Kings 8:27). If there is a third heaven, there must also be a first and second heaven. The first heaven is that of the earth's atmosphere and clouds (Job 35:5). The second heaven is that of the stellar universe (Gen. 1:17; Deut. 17:3).

4. Do babies and little children go to heaven at the moment of death?

Yes, Scriptures indicate that babies and little children go to heaven at the moment of death. One example of this is the Old Testament story of King David when his son died. King David certainly believed he would again be with his young son. In fact, he had no doubt that he would spend eternity with his beloved little one when he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell *whether* the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' ²³ But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" (2 Sam. 12:22-23, emphasis mine).

5. Will those who die in infancy remain babies in heaven?

While the Bible does not specifically address this question, we know that heaven is a place of maturity and perfection (Ephes. 4:13-15; Matt. 5:48). Because of this, it goes better with the nature and plan of God for those who did not have the opportunity of maturity here to attain it there.

6. How many people will be in heaven?

We cannot tell the exact number of people that will be in heaven. However, we know that God desires all to be saved. (2 Pet. 3:9, 1 Tim. 2:4). This tells us that everyone God can possibly get there without violating their free will, will be in heaven (Matt. 23:27).

7. Will Adam and Eve be in Heaven?

There is a good indication that Adam and Eve will be in heaven. After the fall, God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21). Many scholars understand this as the first animal sacrifice, foreshadowing the eventual death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. God continued to talk with Adam and Eve and provide for them after the fall. Also, Adam and Eve knew of God's promise that He would provide a Savior for mankind (Gen. 3:15).

Furthermore, we must consider the fact that humans were always justified (saved) by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:1-11). Therefore, since Adam and Eve trusted in the Lord (Gen. 4:1,25) there is good reason to believe that they were saved.

8. Do people go to heaven immediately when they die?

When a believer dies today, he is "present with the Lord" in heaven (2 Cor. 5:6-9, Phill. 1:21-23). There, he joins the Old Testament saints who have been enjoying their reward for thousands of years. Death for Christians is a wonderful experience because now they get to see all their loved ones who have died in the faith before them. But more importantly, they get the opportunity to finally be with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The story for an unbeliever is far grimmer. In fact, it is just the opposite of what happens to a believer. When an unbeliever dies today, he follows the Old Testament unbelievers to the torment side of Hades. At the final judgment, Hades will be emptied before the Great White Throne, where its occupants will be judged prior to entering the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13-15).

9. What is my deceased Christian mother doing in heaven now?

When a Christian dies, that Christian is absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). So deceased Christian loved ones are with God and all the other loved ones who were saved and died in the faith. They will obviously be worshipping, fellowshiping, and celebrating as they await the return of Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 3:13). We also know that when saints die, they will be judged (Heb. 9:27); not for punishment but to determine what their rewards will be (2 Cor. 5:10). Therefore, they may be in training as to how to use those rewards in service to Jesus Christ during the millennium and beyond. Whatever activities they are engaged in while in heaven, we know that they are having the greatest time with everlasting pleasure (Psalm 16:11).

10. Can people in heaven look down and see us?

Some believe that when Hebrews 12:1 say that we are “surrounded by a cloud of witnesses” this means that people in heaven can look down upon us and know what we’re doing. But that is a wrong interpretation of this verse. The proper interpretation of Hebrews 12:1 is that the men and women forming the “great cloud of witnesses” are witness to the value of living life by *faith*. Their Old Testament stories give testimony to the blessings of choosing faith over fear. To paraphrase the start of Hebrews 12:1, “Since we have so many tried-and-true examples of proven faith . . .”.

Some people point to the rich man’s mention of his brothers in Luke 16:28 as proof that departed souls (in Hades at least) can see events on earth. However, the passage never says that the rich man could *see* his brothers; rather he knew he had brothers, and he knew they were unbelievers.

Others use Revelation 6:10 as a proof text: the tribulation martyrs call for God to avenge their deaths. Again, this passage says nothing about the martyrs *seeing* people on earth; it simply says that they knew they deserved justice and desired the Lord to take action.

The Bible doesn’t specifically say that people in heaven *cannot* look down on us, so we can’t be dogmatic about answers to this question. However, it is unlikely that they can. People in heaven are likely preoccupied with other things such as worshipping God and enjoying the glories of heaven. With that being said, I personally feel certain that loved ones in heaven are made aware, perhaps by angels, of major events taking place on earth; especially those events that affect the timing of their return to earth with Jesus when He comes for His church.

11. Will we continue to learn and improve morally in heaven?

Some theologians believe heaven is like a great university where we all learn of God’s grace and become more like Him. This is based on Ephesians 3:10 and 1 Peter. 1:12. Other theologians believe heaven is a place of perfection, attainment, and rewards, not one of progress, striving, and working for rewards (1 Cor. 13:2; John 9:4; 1 Cor. 3:11).

Because God is eternal (no beginning, no ending, outside of time and space, and cannot change) and we aren't, I believe we will continue to learn about God throughout eternity. My feelings on this are further corroborated when I consider the fact that God is infinite (1 Kings 8:27, Job 11:7-9) and we are finite. Finite minds can never fully comprehend an infinite God so it is reasonable to believe that we will continue to learn about God throughout eternity.

12. Will believers have physical bodies in heaven?

Many people believe we will automatically have spiritually bodies but this is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible shows that we will have physical bodies when we are in heaven. It is clear that our bodies will be physical from the following Scriptures.

- Jesus' resurrection body was the same physical body in which he died. (Luke. 24:39-40, John 20:27).
- It was a physical body. (Matt. 28:9, Luke. 24:39, John. 2:19-21).
- Our resurrection bodies will be like Jesus' body. (Phil. 3:21).

When we read these verses together, we have to conclude that we will not have spiritual bodies in heaven. It helps to understand Jesus Christ is "the first fruits" of those who have died (1 Cor. 15:20, 23), meaning that He set the example and led the way for all of His followers who would come after Him. When Jesus was resurrected, He had the same physical body in which He was buried. However Jesus was able to ascend into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and enter rooms when the doors were closed (John 20:19). So we know that at the very least we will have physical bodies in heaven but our physical bodies will be incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:53-55) and capable of navigating through space.

13. Will we eat and drink in heaven?

Yes, we will eat and drink in heaven but for enjoyment not for sustenance. Our resurrection bodies will have a supernatural energy source. (1 Cor. 15:44). Jesus ate in His resurrection body several times, and our body will be like His. (Luke. 24:30-31, 41; John 21:12-13; Acts 10:41). Also, because our bodies will be glorified, perfect bodies, we will have the ability to taste every "morsel" of food with the highest level of enjoyment, and without gaining weight.

14. Will we be able to explore the universe in heaven?

Yes, we will be capable of exploring the universe while in heaven. Furthermore, we will have the capacity to do this in an infinitely higher manner than space travelers that we know of today. Today, we have finite minds and when we're in heaven we will have finite minds but we will learn and know through the infinite Mind of God. Our knowledge will be an intuition of the infinite resources of God's mind.

15. Will we experience time in heaven?

Some theologians believe we will not experience time because we will be in a state of perfection in eternity, and perfection does not change as time does. Also, the cycle of day and night seem to be done away with (Rev. 21:23). Yet, there are Scriptures that indicate there will be time in heaven: There will be silence in heaven for about “an hour” (Rev. 8:1). The souls of those martyred asked God, “how long...?” (Rev. 6:9). The tree of life bears fruits every “month” (Rev. 22:1-2). All of these verses indicate some type of time in heaven even though it may be a modified version of the time we know today.

Furthermore, there will be music in heaven and music requires proper timing for its beat, etc. So we believe we can rationally infer that there will be some modified version of time in heaven if not the if not the same type time we know of today.

16. What will we do in heaven for all eternity?

- We will be worshipping and praising God (Rev. 19:1-6).
- Perpetual serving of God and Christ (Rev. 1:5; 22:3).
- Learning more about God (Ephes. 2:7).

This does not mean that we will be “bored” but just the opposite. For example, learning more about God (who is infinite) and the creation (which is expanding since the beginning) is itself an adventure that will give us eternal pleasure (Psalm 16:11). In additions to this, we will meet and learn about all the Old Testament saints as well as the apostles and prophets in the New Testament. How great it would be to actually meet and talk with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Daniel and the other Old Testament prophets. And what as experience it will be to meet and talk with the Apostle Paul, John and of the gospels; and all of this while learning about an infinite God. There will never be a dull or boring moment from the time we get into heaven throughout all eternity.

17. Will husbands and wives be married in the afterlife?

Husbands and wives will no longer have the status of “married” to each other in the Kingdom of Heaven as we know marriage today (Matt. 22:30). Jesus Christ will have married the church at this stage and the church as a whole will be the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-9). However, this should not be looked upon as being deprived of something good. My wife Jan and I will always have had the privilege and honor of having been married in the old world. Now we will have a deeper abiding love for each other for all eternity, just not with the title of husband and wife. Perhaps the relationship will be classified with a different title; but whatever the case may be, we know that we will be together with eternal pleasures (Psalm 16:11).

18. Will we have our pets in heaven?

It is clear that God loves animals as we see animals throughout the Bible. We see God saved animals from the flood (Gen. 6:19-20). We see passages of Scriptures talking about the lion lying down with the lamb and other animals being at peace with one another (Isa. 11:6-9). Furthermore, God said that a righteous man takes care of his animals (Prov. 12:10). Jesus and the saints return on white horses (Rev. 19:11-14). Therefore, we believe that there will be animals in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whether these will be newly created animals or resurrected, restored animals, we cannot say as the Bible gives no indication of resurrected animals.

19. Will we sleep in heaven?

Sleep is a physical necessity for our earthly bodies. God created us with a need for sleep and rest right from the beginning of creation. While the Bible does not tell us specifically why God created us with a need for sleep, we know that sleep is physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually beneficial for us. When we don't get enough sleep, our brains stop functioning properly and our bodies are worn down. When we are in heaven, we will have imperishable, incorruptible, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:53) designed to last forever in the presence of God. Sleep will not be necessary. Furthermore, the Bible tells us that in the eternal state there will be no night in heaven (Rev. 21:25). This indicates that we will not have a need for sleep. However, we may be able to "sleep" as a source of enjoyment or relaxation.

20. How can we be happy in heaven knowing that some of our loved ones are in hell?

God has promised that He will take away all our pains and remove all our tears (Rev. 21:4). He also said that we will have eternal pleasures when we are in heaven (Psalm 16:11). From this we know that whatever way God handles this situation, He is not going to let us feel bad about our loved ones in hell. Some theologians suggest that God will erase from our minds the memories of all loved ones who went to the Lake of Fire. It will be as though we don't know they existed. Another belief is that since we are now perfect in our glorified state, we will see those loved ones as God sees them. That is, hell is where they chose to be so that is why they are there. When we see them as God sees them and with this perspective, we will not be affected by the fact that they are in hell.

Appendix Two: Questions and Answers About Hell

1. Who will be in hell?

The Bible makes it abundantly clear who will be in hell. We list them here in four distinct groups.

- Satan (Rev. 20:10)

- The Beast and the False Prophet (Rev. 20:10)
- Evil Angels (2 Pet. 2:4)
- Fallen human beings (Body, Soul, and Spirit) are cast into everlasting punishment (Mt. 5:30; 10:28; 18:9; Rev. 20:15).

Obviously, this means that there will be multiple billions of people and spirit beings in hell. This is the worse fate that any being can incur, but God cannot force people to love Him.

2. What is the intermediate state of the unsaved?

At the moment of death unbelievers go as disembodied spirits to a temporary place of suffering (Luke 16:19-31). They are held there until the time of judgment (2 Pet. 2:9). They will be resurrected and judged at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Those who are being judged at the Great White Throne judgement are not being judged to determine if they are to be saved or unsaved as this has already been determined. In other words, everyone at the Great White Throne judgment are already condemned to hell. The judgement is to determine what degree of punishment they will be assigned to in hell (Matt. 10:15, Rev. 20:12-13).

3. Does the Bible teach the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory?

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, purgatory is, a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are, not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions." In this "place or condition", the soul is purged, cleansed, readied for eternal union with God in Heaven." In other words, after the person dies, he or she still has sins in which they must first be "purged" of before they can enter heaven.

This doctrine carries with it serious conflicts when compared with the Holy Bible. According to the Bible, on the cross Jesus said "It is Finished" (John 19:30). Jesus said, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do: (John 17:4). Hebrews 10:14 said, "By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." Therefore, according to the Bible the doctrine of purgatory is not necessary or biblical.

4. Why would God punish people in hell rather than reforming them?

Reformation is exactly what God is in the process of doing right now and this period of reformation is called life (Luke 16:31). After the time of reformation, comes the time of reckoning (Heb. 9:27). Also, reforming people against their will dehumanizes them. God gives every human being free will to choose with whom they want to spend eternity

(Deut. 30:19) and He does not interfere with that choice. He will not force people to spend eternity with Him as this will violate the gift of free will.

5. What if someone changes his mind after going to hell?

First, God is omniscience (knows everything, past, present, and future). As such God know should accept His Son, who would reject His Son, and who would change their minds about accepting the free gift of salvation. With this understanding and the fact that God wants everyone to be save, He certainly would not allow someone to go to hell that He knew would change their minds (2 Pet. 3:9, 1 Tim 2:4).

CS Lewis said the following: “I believe that if a million chances were likely to do good, they would be given.... Finality must come some time, and it does not require a very robust faith to believe that omniscience knows when.” (The Problem of Pain, 112).

Second, those who won't repent here with all the light they have will want even less to repent when there is no light (Those who reject Christ get “strong delusions to believe a lie” – 2 Thess. 2:11). If they don't see the need with some light here they will not see the need with no light there.

6. Why doesn't God save everyone at any cost?

Human beings are free moral agents with free will and God cannot force people to love Him. “Force love” is a contradiction.

As CS Lewis put it, “I would pay any price to be able to say truthfully ‘All will be saved.’ But my reason retorts, “Without their will, or with it?” If I say “Without their will” I at once perceive a contradiction; how can the supreme voluntary act of self-surrender be involuntary? If I say, “With their will,” my reason replies “How if they will not give in?” (The Problem of Pain, 106-107)

7. Isn't it Overkill to Give Eternal Damnation for Temporal Sin?

- First, only eternal punishment will suffice for sins against the eternal God.
- Second, No sin can be tolerated as long as God exists, and God is eternal.
- Third, Sin against an infinite God is an infinitely bad sin that is worthy of infinite punishment.

The bottom-line is this: God is infinite and eternal and any sin against Him has infinite and eternal consequences. It is the unchanging, divine nature of God that requires eternal damnation for sin. The sin may be temporal from our perspective but not from God's.

8. How can we be happy in heaven knowing we have loved ones in hell?

Theologians and Christian Apologists have come up with three possibilities:

- God may purge the memories of our loved ones who are in hell (Isa. 65:17-19).
- We will have a perfected spirit with an ability to see things clearly from a divine perspective.
- We will have a perfect sense of God's justice and know that there are degrees of punishment in hell (Matt. 10:15).

9. Why Did God Create People He Knew Would Go to Hell?

First, we must consider the fact that some existence is better than no existence at all since no existence is nothing. Second, just because not everyone will win in the game of life does not mean the game of life should not be played. Certainly, some people will go to hell but what about the billions of people who will experience eternal joy in heaven with God? Should they not be given that opportunity because some would choose not to have it? Certainly, they should be given the opportunity right along with those who reject it!

10. Is it Just to Send People to Hell Who Can't Help Being Sinners?

When we look carefully at the situation with going to hell, we can narrow it down to two reasons why people go to hell:

- They are born with a *propensity* to sin. They are born on a road that leads to hell, and
- They *choose* to sin. but they also fail to heed the warning signs along the way to avoid it (Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9).

A person's sin nature does not force them to sin; it only inclines them to sin. They choose to sin. Nevertheless, God in His mercy and love provides a way to help people who may be in either of these situations. He loves the people of the world so much that He sent His Son Jesus to pay the penalty for the sins of humankind so that they would not go to hell (John 3:16). Furthermore, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell anyone who would repent of their sins, and accept the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38-39). He, the Holy Spirit helps us to overcome our human shortcomings and live godly lives.

11. Why not Annihilate Sinners Instead of Tormenting Them? After all, we do shoot animals that are trapped in burning buildings.

First, it is precisely because we are not animals that God does not treat us like animals.

Second, to annihilate those who do not do His will would be as unkind as a father who shoots his son because he chose not to do his will.

Third, to annihilate those made in His image would be to attack Himself.

God loves everyone, even those who go to hell. This is because it is His nature to love (1 John 2:4). Because people choose not to love God, they are separated from Him in a place called hell. This is where the torment comes in – being separated from God for all eternity.

12. Isn't it Cruel to Torture People Forever?

- First, the Bible never calls hell torture.
- Second, torture is *unjustly* inflicted on someone against their will.
- Third, torment (the biblical word) is something brought on one *justly* by his own will.

See the comments above.

13. Isn't Hell Contrary to the Mercy and Goodness of God?

- First, God's mercy is not a passion or emotion that negates His justice.
- Second, supposing God's mercy does not permit suffering is contrary to fact. God allows plenty of suffering in this world.
- Finally, in heaven our attitudes and feelings will be transformed and correspond more perfectly to God's.

Simply put, God is Mercy and Goodness, but He is all Just. A just God must get rid of evil, or He wouldn't be just. He chose a place called hell as the final place for all evil.

14. If Hell is What One Chooses What About Those Who Don't Want To Be There?

- First of all, everyone in Hell *willed* to be there even if they don't want to be there.
- Second, the door of Hell is locked on the inside.

CS Lewis said, "*I willingly believe that the damned are, in one sense, successful, rebels to the end; that the doors of hell are locked on the inside...*" (Lewis, Problem of Pain, 115).

15. What About Those Who Have Never Heard?

- Everyone has General Revelation in Nature (Rom. 1:19-20).
- Everyone has General Revelation in their heart (Rom. 2:12-15).
- No one can be saved apart from the knowledge of Christ (John 14:6).
- Everyone who seeks God, finds God (Jer. 29:13).

- God has many ways to get the message of salvation to those who seek Him.

God, being omniscience, knows who will accept His Son as Lord and Savior before they were even born. Based on this foreknowledge, and because God does not want anyone to go to hell (2 Peter 3:9) God will see that any person He knows will accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, will get the opportunity to do so.

16. What are the Effects of Being in Hell?

- Separation from God and His Glory (2 Thes. 1:9).
- Different Degrees of Punishment (Matt. 10:15; 16:27; Luke 12:47-48; Rev. 20:12,13).
- Final Eternal State – No Second Chance (Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:44-48; Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9).

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